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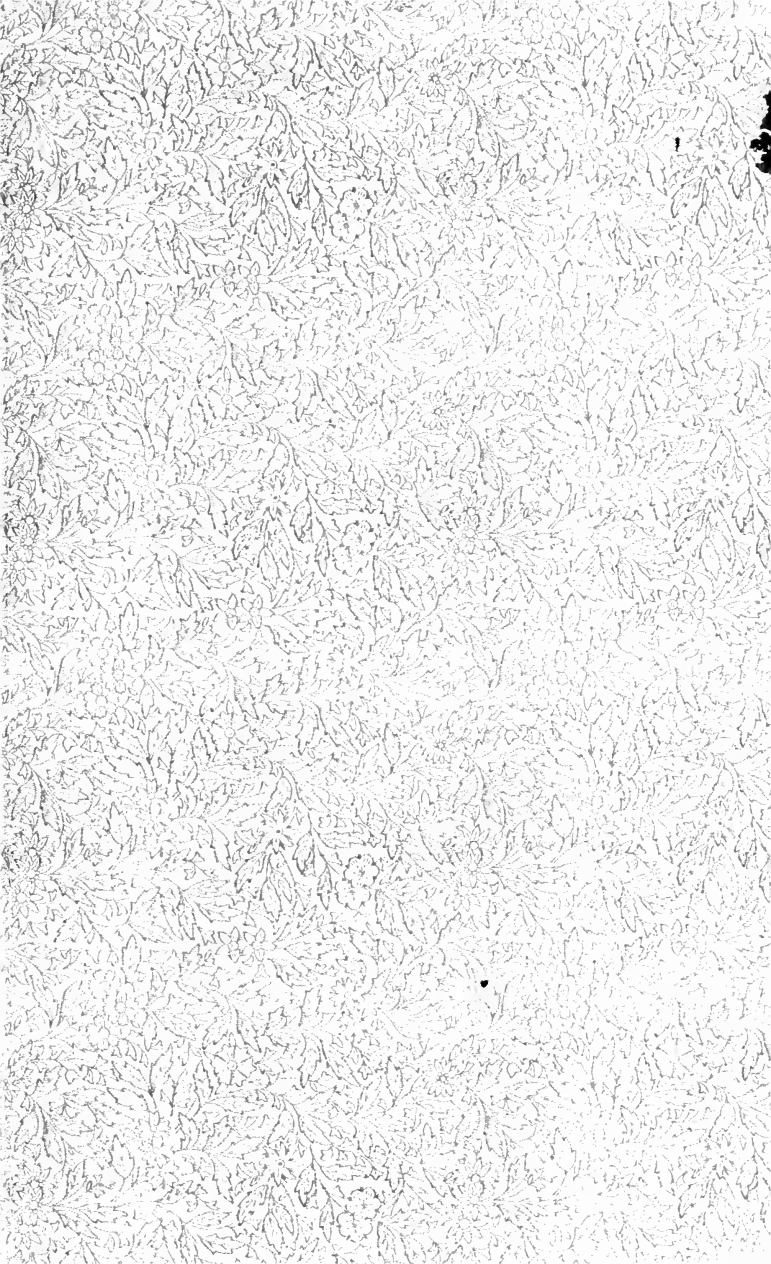

GOOD MEASURE.

A NOVEL OF S. AFRICAN INTEREST.

By

NELLIE FINCHER.

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF BRENDIFORD," "LOCAL COLOURING," "SCHELMS," "OUT OF THE DEPTHS," ETC., ETC.

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A GLOSSARY OF ZULU WORDS AND PHRASES APPEARING IN "GOOD MEASURE."

L'Tongo—Ancestral spirit (*amatonga*, the plural). (N.B.—The prefix *ama* is used to denote the plural in many Zulu words.)

Idhlozi—An ancestral guardian spirit.

Umfundisi—A teacher: a clergyman.

Umfana—A native boy.

Inkosazana—A princess, eldest daughter of a chief wife or any daughter of a chief or person of importance: a white unmarried lady.

Nkosikazi—A queen, the wife of a Royal or great person, used by the Zulus when speaking to or of a white married lady. Chief wife. Also a term of courtesy applied to any married woman.

Lobola—Cattle or goats given to the father or guardian of the bride to compensate him for the loss of the girl. Since East Coast Fever has denuded Zululand of cattle, goats and horses are used for lobola. Ten head of cattle are an ordinary number required and given. It depends on the birth and rank of the bride.

Nkosikazi y Zulu—A fabulous deity believed by the Zulus to be a white woman with beautiful hair, who appears in the heavens at a crisis to warn and comfort the beholder. The "house boy," as I write, assures me he has seen her often when he was herding goats for his father.

Nkulunkulu—The Great-great One, adopted by the missionaries as the best translation of God to the Zulu.

Tokoloshe—A mischievous fairy or pixie, three feet in height, with eyes hidden by tangled hair, whose visitation means death to the beholder after three days. Frequents the bush, or places where there is a thick tangle of undergrowth. Is supposed to go about in groups of fives. A fabulous water-baby or kelpy, supposed to haunt certain rivers and be very fond of women, though afraid of men.

Intakati—A wizard or witch.

Ntombi—An unmarried girl.

Ikolwa—A convert to Christianity, but is often used to describe natives who wear European clothes and are not adherents to Christianity.

GLOSSARY OF ZULU WORDS AND PHRASES.

ABELUNGU—The white people. Many natives know the difference between English, Scotch, Norwegian, and other European nations.

INDUNA—A headman; a foreman.

MUTSHA—A strip of skin hanging from the waist in front.

IBETSHU—A wide piece of skin, sometimes a goat's complete hide, worn at the back.

MUNTU—A human being; a person.

LAPA—Here.

BEKA—Look.

VAKATSHA—To go the rounds; walk about; take a walk.

AMABELE—Kafir corn.

AMADUKU—Head-dresses (*Iduka*, singular).

"SAKUBONA, BABA 'NKOSI!"—A form of greeting; literally, "I see you, my father and master."

MUTI—Medicine.

HAMBA!—Go!

SUKA!—Get out!

AMASI—Sour milk, kept in a gourd, and added to, from time to time, but never really emptied.

UTYALA—Kafir beer, made from amabele.

INKOSI—A chief. *'Nkosi*, used with the second person, when a chief is spoken to. The same rule applies to *Inkosikazi* (*'Nkosikazi*) when a married woman of high rank is spoken to.

ABATWALI—The bearers, usually those who carry things on their heads.

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

"THE HEIR OF BRENDIFORD"

(Published by Messrs. Davis & Sons, Maritzburg. Three Editions, in six months. 2s.)

Extracts from the Press:—

"Miss Fincher shows a remarkable grip of her subject, a true insight into the effect of contact by white and black, and first impressions on children, while her other characters are living, sensate beings, whom one has met, and could similarly describe if one had the art. The descriptions of Natal and the Berea, the home life in England, the love and eventual agony of the mother, the staunch Natal Police, and, in short, the whole of the characters, are drawn with a firm hand, and with intimate knowledge. We hope the book will have a large sale, which it deserves."—*Natal Mercury*.

"Government House, Natal,
28th January, 1910.

Dear Miss Fincher,—The evil against which you have written is one that I consider very real, and I shall be glad to have several copies of the book, the publication of which will be in the interests of the Colony.

Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW NATHAN."

"Government House, Natal.
His Excellency has no objection to you using his letter to further the sale of 'The Heir of Brendiford.'"

"The proposal to inaugurate a more strenuous campaign to abolish the 'kafir kindergarten,' the results of which training are so remarkably set forth in Miss Fincher's book, 'The Heir of Brendiford.'"—Leader in *Natal Mercury*, March 31st, 1909.

"His Majesty's private secretary has notified Miss N. Fincher that the King will be pleased to accept a copy of her clever and original book, 'The Heir of Brendiford.'"—*Natal Advertiser*, September 4th, 1909.

"The authoress recognises the good qualities of the coloured races, and bears testimony to the heights of personal loyalty and devotion to which individual members attain. There is no vulgar abuse of colour as colour."—*Transvaal Leader*, May 25th, 1909.

"Miss Fincher's readers should read the book again and again. . . . . It is a study for the studious."—*Ilanga lase Natal* (Zulu-newspaper), August 22nd, 1910.

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

"The book comes at a moment when the future of South Africa is in the lap of the gods. It is a book to be read by every man and woman who wishes to see their country take its place among the nations."

"The Colony owes a debt of gratitude to Miss Fincher."—Capt. Donald Dallas, in the *Natal Mercury*.

"Miss Fincher has rendered a patriotic service to Natal in calling attention to a danger which one witnesses daily in our streets and on the Berea."—*Natal Mercury*, March 11th, 1909.

"The book should be read by everyone, since its purpose is noble and its treatment of an unsavoury subject excellent in taste and delicacy."—*Natal Mercury*, March 17th, 1909.

"I think we cannot be too grateful to Miss Fincher for having given us that fine story 'The Heir of Brendiford.' I wish it were possible to insure that every mother in South Africa would read it." —Harry M. Whiteman, in the *Natal Witness*, July 28th, 1910.

"SCHELMS"

(Published by Robinson & Co., Mercury Lane, Durban, S.A.; 1s.)

Extracts from the Press:—

"We have received from the authoress (Miss Nellie Fincher, of Durban, Natal) a copy of her new story, 'Schelms,' which is, apparently, the Natal term for 'rascals'; but not exactly in the worst meaning of the word, for little Miss Winnie, although she may be troublesome and mischievous enough to deserve the name, is really a very delightful person, and we are sure that Captain Percy Donns, when he succeeded in making her his wife, knew very well what he was about. Miss Fincher has already made some reputation with a previous story, 'The Heir of Brendiford,' and her latest effort will do much to make her work still better known."—*The Bookseller*, London, September 10th, 1909.

"The authoress of that remarkable book, 'The Heir of Brendiford,' has published a little brochure of three short stories. They are very pleasant reading. This little effort is especially attractive. Miss Fincher is a doughty champion of the Garden Colony, and of all things Natalian."—*Natal Mercury*, August, 1909.

"Miss Fincher has given us a very vivid portrayal of life in the Garden Colony. The style is fresh and pleasing, and the theme is sympathetically treated. The tale has a strong human interest which is well sustained throughout. Miss Fincher writes interestingly, and the present little volume should enhance her reputation."—*Cape Times*, September 25th, 1909.

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

"While it is very refreshing from time to time to have these short stories from a writer who has the enviable gift of imagination, it is to be hoped that we shall see another longer work from Miss Fincher before very long. Miss Fincher has that descriptive power and breadth of sympathy, that gift of characterisation and knowledge of the country and its peoples, which admirably qualify her for exploiting a young country through the medium of romance. . . . . I commend this little work, for it contains much which is admirably told."—*Times of Natal,* February 11th, 1910.

PREFACE.

In giving my book "Good Measure" to the world, I should like to explain how it came to be written, and that if, as I have been so frequently asked, it can be depended upon for portraying a true picture of modern life in Zululand, more especially as it concerns the natives. The key to the native question will be found in Zululand, the stronghold of their ancient traditions and superstitions. Many people go into Zululand for sport or pleasure, or it may be to trade there, but to comparatively few is the native character revealed, and experts tell us that there is a wall which divides the black and white, and, after knowing a native very well for many years, it will be discovered by some act or thought of his that one scarcely knows him at all. Yet, it is these occasional flashes of revelation which show us where he is and in what atmosphere his life is enveloped. They are scarcely ever given to people who employ natives in towns. The house-boy, or store-boy, goes about his work in a stolid, mechanical fashion, he comes and goes home to his kraal again, slips in and out of civilisation, but what he is himself, and how he thinks and feels, is almost always hidden from these associated with him. I went to Kwamagwaza in December, 1909, for several months' visit to a friend at a mission station. I revelled in the new aspects of life presented to me there, and the flashes of revelation about the natives that came my way. The position was an unique one, because it was not my business to exercise authority over the black neighbours, it was left to me to accept their compliments and expressions of goodwill, and to enter into their feelings as far as I was able by the divination of character that is an additional sense to a novelist. "You have seen far more than I, who have lived here all my life!" one resident of Zululand said. "It is quite true, but I had never noticed it before," she added laughingly.

This was said so often to me, that I determined to collect and arrange all the material mentally and construct a novel, which should be a true picture of the Zulu, and bring him somewhat within the sphere of comprehension. The book was a long time in the air, being created, so to speak, because I wanted conscientiously to draw a true picture of real people, and yet to alter them and to arrange the plot in such a way that nobody's sensibilities would be hurt. At last, metaphorically, it dropped from the clouds, on to paper, every chapter being scrutinised by a committee of experts in the Zulu manners and customs, and in many cases by the natives themselves.

When I wanted to assimilate the heathen atmosphere I travelled on foot through a thickly populated part of the country where no white man's wagon road, bridle path or house was to be seen. This journey, with native girls as bearers, took us a whole day, because we lost ourselves; but at the end, although I was spent, I knew what the more enlightened natives meant when they spoke of people "sitting in the darkness." I had thought it was just a biblical phrase which they had made their own; but I learned amongst other things during my stay in a remote part of Zululand, that the natives' language is naturally biblical. For instance, they always say "sitting" when they mean dwelling or staying in a place. They will talk of the hills smiling, the mountains moving, all unconscious that they are using a type of language which was customary amongst the ancient Jews, another pastoral people. Two women often grind together at a mill, and the commonest wild flower of the country is a lily. Gorgeous patches of blue lilies in a hollow by a waterfall, or handsome coral ones dotted over the hillsides, besides numerous varieties too many to mention in particular, give touches of colour to the landscapes of Zululand. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow!" The missionary is teaching the Zulu to behold God's dealings in the world of nature around him. Nice thoughts make pleasant faces, even if they be black, and it is noticeable that the people sitting in darkness, although

they may be polite and hospitable, have countenances in many cases too repulsive for words. There is a darkness that may be felt about them.

*I had a talk during my stay with an aged man uSetaku, the son of imPanda, and therefore uncle to Dinizulu. He was lying on a hide, and was too feeble to turn over without assistance; but he was quite intelligent, even diplomatic, and asked me how King Edward was, and if "The Child" (Dinizulu) would be soon out of prison. The young princes, his sons, told us afterwards that when their father was dead they would build square houses, wear European clothes, and "look out," as one expressed himself, "the indaba (matter) of Christianity."

The beehive-shaped huts are doomed, and the Zulus are craving after education and civilisation in very many instances. There is a groping for something better. Still the witch doctor has a great deal of power, and, just as in Europe, old superstitions die hard. By the by I might mention that uSetaku had had over forty-eight wives, and had more than one hundred and forty-four children. War! wives! beer! and a great horror of the supernatural! It is not a very elevated outlook, yet it has been the life of uSetaku. Nothing better has ever reached his inner consciousness, and when I looked at his shrunken, feeble frame, and knew that he was dying, and that he had been a fine man according to his lights, I was sad for him. Life is not only wives, beer, war, and ghosts. Poor old man, he has been wandering round in a circle for some eighty years! He put out his hand and murmured effusive compliments and blessings, and as his withered palm lay in mine, I thought, "But he has never been out of the scheme of God's providence, and never can be."

This son of a Zulu king, who has been a mighty prince in his time, will pass over soon, and with him much of the old order and regime.

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*Since writing the above paragraph, uSetuka, the aged Zulu prince, has died.—Nellie Fincher, Pietermaritzburg, 1910.

Preface

Now I am back again in the life and bustle of a Colonial city, and those four months spent in Zululand seem like a dream—a life on a different plane. All that I gleaned and learned I fitted into the plot of "Good Measure."

These two letters may be of interest, one from Lord Methuen, General Officer Commanding the Forces in South Africa, and the other from the Bishop of Zululand.

Government House,
Pietermaritzburg, Natal.

Dear Miss Fincher,

I feel that it is to the interests of all in South Africa that we should learn thoroughly the characteristics of the Zulu race. Many talk, myself included, with a very superficial knowledge; we have not the opportunity of travelling in Zululand, and we listen to our neighbours. Therefore, the opinion of anyone, who like yourself has gone into the country to study the people, and knows how to put one's experiences in writing, must carry weight. For this reason I would like 25 copies.

Yours truly,
Methuen.

21st May, 1910.

Zululand,
April 20th, 1910.

Dear Miss Fincher,

I am glad to hear about "Good Measure." You can rely upon me to push the sale of it. I will ask our secretaries in England to get all friends of Zululand and South Africa to buy it; and in other ways get it advertised. And I shall take several copies myself. After I met you at Kwamagwaza I had some thought of suggesting such a book to you. I am glad now that I left it to your own initiative. Such a book should do very much good: and people are now beginning to realise what must be done, as well as what has been done for the Native races.

Yours very sincerely,
Wilmot, Zululand

To

Miss Harriet Stokes.

"Is thy cruse of comfort wasting? Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and thy brother.

Love divine will fill thy storehouse, and thy garner still renew,
Scanty fare for one will often make a royal feast for two.

Numb and weary on the mountains, would'st thou sleep amidst the snow?
Chafe that frozen form beside thee, and together both shall glow.

Is thy burden hard and heavy? Do thy steps drag wearily?
Help to bear another's burden; God will bear both it and thee.

For the heart grows rich in giving; all its wealth is living grain,
Seeds which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain.

Is thy heart a well left empty? Nought but God its void can fill;
Nothing but a ceaseless fountain can a ceaseless longing still."

GOOD MEASURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE RAINMAKERS.

uSIJUBA brought out the mules for the incoming postcart, harnessed them, sat down on his haunches and waited. He could wait very well, it suited his temperament, being a full-blooded Zulu. Away round the side of the distant hill came the postcart. It was a bright and clear day after five rainy ones, and in consequence there was no dust; the air was fresh and invigorating, and the hillsides and the bush a beautiful vivid green. The melodious twittering and calling of many birds gave an undertone of quiet content to the landscape. A herd of goats and three cows were browsing together. Joseph, the herd boy, came and sat down by uSijuba. "Sakubona, Baba," said Joseph, as he spread out the tails of his military greatcoat on the ground.

"Yebo!" and uSijuba took out a box of snuff from his greatcoat pocket, and presented it to Joseph with customary Zulu politeness.

The waistcoat, which at one time had belonged to a corpulent white man, was the only covering, besides his mutya, uSijuba wore. The waistcoat hung round his slim, shapely figure like a cape, and to European eyes looked singularly grotesque. Moreover, the greatcoat the "umfana," Joseph, wore also had belonged to a bigger person, and trailed on the ground. It was split up into an uneven fringe of rags at the bottom, and the sleeves were rolled up half way so that the boy's hands were visible. The greatcoat had lost the top button—the only one which was of any use to Joseph. The garment was kept on by a piece of string and a stick, used in a most ingenious way, instead of the missing button. If the umfana had used another brass button lower down on the coat, he would simply have slipped out of that garment—hence the bit of string and the stick.

"So you have come to work!" Joseph said to the young Zulu.

"Yebo!" uSijuba said, enjoying his pinch of snuff.

"Why don't you go and work for a white man instead of a half-caste like Jan?" Joseph questioned.

"It was in the wind that I should come and herd Jan's mules, and to put them into the postcart for him." uSijuba said, "My father brought me."

Joseph paused, and then threw a clod at the black-and-white cow, who was nibbling at Jan's fodder.

"Wai mame!" he said, "Tin-milk has a taste for good things! She wanders away over the hillsides trying to steal somebody's store. She knows that we have little to feed her on at home."

"But surely the grass is sweet enough since it rained!" suggested uSijuba.

"Yebo!" but Tin-milk has found a taste superior to grass. She likes sweet potatoes, oats, mealies, and steals them whenever she gets a chance.

uSijuba grinned.

"That is because she is ikolwa, and belongs to a mission station," he said. "The amatonga depart even from the herds," he added.

This was a sly thrust at Joseph for being a Christian, when uSijuba was not.

Joseph was a quick-witted little fellow, and got up laughing.

"All amakolwa, Christianised natives, have a taste for good things," he said. "We Christians begin to see how foolish and wrong it is to put our faith in amatonga"—(spirits of Zulu ancestors who are supposed to inspire and protect their descendants). "Tell me how much money do you get, and how long have you to work for your father.

"I get fifteen shillings a month, or, rather, I do not get any money at all. My father has it to lobola a young wife."

Then an old native with a ring on his head and dressed in a mutya came round the knoll.

uSijuba threw up his hand in deference. "Sakubona, Baba!" he exclaimed. The newcomer was far less deferentially greeted by Joseph. Maseba asked his son if he had any money. uSijuba told him not yet, but he would get some to-morrow. Jan had not paid him yet.

"I am going to buy some cattle," Maseba said. "In these days one has to go a long way to get a few cows, as

they are nearly all dead. I am old, and I want a young wife to make me young. Before the sun is high again you must bring your money. I want it for lobola."

"Yebo, Baba!" assented uSijuba, whose face was peculiarly placid and free from any sparks of energy or ambition.

Maseba carried one or two sticks, a knobkerrie, and a small shield, used by natives when they go a-courting. His son saluted gravely and they parted.

"Wai!" said Joseph, laughing as he watched him go. "The wicked old heathen, your father, is going up to the mission to beg for snuff and sugar on his way. He abuses the ladies and the umfundisi loudly behind their backs, but he never forgets to be extremely polite when he wants snuff or sugar. Au! uSijuba made a dash at Joseph with the stick he carried, and the small boy sprang away laughing.

Just then the postcart swept round the curve of the road, and drew up at the stable with a great champing of bits and rattling of harness from the eight mules.

"Get out, Shell-back! Black Bess! Roe Buck! Ugh! naughty girls!" Jan cracked the whip over his team, and half-playfully scolded and encouraged the mules.

He generally got down and cast his eyes fondly over his animals, with the whip tucked under his arm. To-day his eye fell on uSijuba chasing the roguish Joseph.

"He has been sucking my eggs, uSijuba—hasn't he?"

uSijuba, without wishing to lie, according to his standard of truth, and seeing that his master wished and expected him to say that Joseph had stolen the eggs, assented. A Zulu will always accept the suggestion of his superior. He may not mean to lie, but he thinks it impolite to contradict his master. In a second Joseph was caught by Jan's strong hand, and flogged soundly with the short whip he carried. The little boy howled and blubbered freely.

Maseba turned and shouted back, "Yebo, Baas! He deserves that and a great deal more!"

Jan tossed the boy away, and said that if uSijuba encouraged amakolwa about his stables, and allowed them to gather up his eggs, he would thrash him too.

"Yes, Sar," said Jan, to the only passenger in the postcart, "now I know where my eggs is agoing to! Why, Sar, you can't trust them Christian kafirs no how!"

Joseph ran away, and flung himself face downwards in the grass. By and by when his grief was somewhat abated

he sat up and plaited a grass bangle. When he drove the goats and cows up to the mission kraal at sunset his bright little face was all smiles, as usual. He saw the Lady Warden lying on a deck chair, and loitered slyly round the verandah. A gentleman—the passenger by the post cart—was talking to her.

It was her brother who had come from England on a visit.

"Yes, Margaret," he was saying, "What a picturesque language theirs is. So soft sounding! So full of metaphor!"

"You are thinking of Maseba, Roy," she said. "I know him very well; he lives about three miles away. He is a minor chief, and somewhat of an old rascal, I am afraid. During the famine he was quite a pensioner. We used to give him two meals a day, and tobacco and sugar often. They think there will be a local famine this year. The mealies are backward; there has been so little rain! Mr. Neville has been asked to continue his prayers for rain."

Maseba had squatted down on his haunches at a little distance, while the Lady Warden had been too busy with her brother to notice that he had not gone right away. He came up now and gravely saluted.

"Ah, Baba!" he said, "thou who makest the old men to run, and the young ones to come swiftly! Wai mame! What shall the country do now the Father of the people lies sick. Mine eyes have been overflowing with tears ever since I heard of the indaba! How shall the people snuff when the Father of the country is laid low? (He had just refused a present of snuff.) Oh, thou, who art so beautiful, a true friend to those who are in trouble, give me some sugar!"

Margaret smiled, but shook her head firmly, and Maseba departed grumbling. He encountered a party of native Christian girls, who were carrying tins of water on their heads, in the wattle plantation. The merry party of girls made way for the old chief. He could have married either or several of these young women, if the "Father of the People," as he had just called Margaret, had not upset the old order of things, causing him to wander out of reach of the white men's influence, and to seek a wife from afar. He lifted up his voice and began to sing an impromptu ditty, deriding the personal appearance of "the Father of the People."

"Oh, thou, with the long nose and scraggy neck,
Oh, thou, whose eyes see into distant kraals,

Who smells out always what the people are doing!
How shall the land bear thee?"

The merry party of girls laughed immoderately, and shouted back smart sallies.

Meanwhile Maseba took a kafir path across the valley, and forded the stream. He breathed a prayer to his edloshi (guardian spirit) because, fierce and brave warrior that he was, he was terribly afraid of supernatural agencies working him ill. Even in crossing the stream, he dreaded to see the snake, said to be fifteen yards long, which lived in the water. He wanted to get the affair of the lobola settled, because he had other matters to arrange and he was anxious that the white people's influence should not intercept them. Therefore he had paid a propitiatory visit to the Mission Station. He wanted to throw "The Father of the People" off the scent.

The white people did not know of the "smelling out" that had taken place in his kraal, and Maseba thought to himself it will be a good thing to make the white people at the Mission Station, whose protestations he feared more than all the others, think that his heart was getting soft, and that he was likely to become a believer.

Whether he dispised or believed in the white people, he knew that they were great, and had a wonderful power and influence in the land. In his heart of hearts he respected them, but he feared them more.

Why did not his mealies grow as well as his neighbours'? The heavy rain had caused the water to rush down with great force and carry quantities of the half-grown mealies with it. The crops that were left looked sickly. There was one old woman at the kraal whom nobody wanted, who seemed to be in everyone's way. Only the little children loved her. Old, wrinkled, and skinny, as she was, yet they liked to nestle in the folds of her blanket and listen to her stories. The witch-doctor had suggested that someone had cast an evil spell on the mealie crops. Several names were mentioned as possible delinquents, but the old woman, Nerea, was carefully ignored. Herein lay the danger, and she knew it? While Maseba stayed at his bride's kraal to settle about lobola, his old wife was sunning herself by the side of the hut. A party of little native boys and girls were playing wolves. They were tumbling about, and pretending to catch and eat each other. Joseph, the ikolwa, was coming towards the kraal, singing at the top of his clear treble voice Jackson's setting to the Te Deum in Zulu. The other little

natives stopped in their play and ran down the track to meet him.

Joseph was wearing a little Oxford shirt the inkosazana at the Mission Station had given him, which had the effect of making him look as if he had been interrupted in his dressing. This was from a European point of view; there was nothing particularly incongruous about Joseph in the eyes of the natives. Joseph wanted eggs. He had been sent by the inkosazana to buy all he could. The children hunted up some eggs, and then they squatted round old Nerea, and begged for a story, Joseph joining in their entreaties also.

Nerea had the remains of a maroon tablecloth draped round her wrinkled frame.

"Once upon a time, there was a very old woman. She went into the bush to get some wood. She was old, very tired, and nobody wanted her. When she got the wood upon her head she ached all over. Then she wandered round seeking someone to help her, and there was nobody. She cried out and said, 'Oh, death, please help me carry the wood!' Death came and helped her. Afterwards there was peace."

"Wai mame!" What a sad story, the children exclaimed. At which the old woman laughed and shook her head. Some of the young wives had strolled up. uSijuba appeared and taunted the girls and children for listening to Nerea's tales.

"Do you not know that they have smelt out that old woman? She takates the crops, and keep the rain that comes from doing them good."

The children sprang away, looking awestruck.

"It's the Umkulukulu makes the rain come and go," broke in little Joseph reverentially.

"Au!" uSijuba drew the back of his hand across his mouth, and laughed derisively.

"Sala kahli! (stay quietly, or in peace), mame," little Joseph said.

"The Lord bless you, my son," said the old woman, whose eyes suddenly filled wtih tears. "Ehe! If my husband had allowed it I would have come to learn at your school. Surely it is good to sit in the light and hear of the Great-great One and His mercies. Wai babo! It is dark and cold for the old women!" Nerea drew her blanket over her head and groaned.

The kraal people drew away, thinking of evil spirits.

Little Joseph took the eggs to Margaret at the Mission Station. She was resting in the wattle plantation.

"Well, Joseph?" she said as the little fellow drew near. She held out her hand for the basket, and on her wrist was the plaited grass bangle that Joseph had made her. Joseph stood near the lounge chair while she counted the eggs. Right away through the vista of trees could be seen the distant hills and Maseba's kraal. A black cloud of smoke was being swept across the green hillside.

"Well, Joseph?" said Margaret again, as the umfana still loitered.

Joseph turned his solemn eyes upon the Lady Warden.

"Will the Umfundisi pray for rain?" he said. "They want it badly at Maseba's kraal

"Of course, Joseph!" she said. "Here comes the Umfundisi—you shall ask him!"

Two men came up at this juncture.

"Clouds of smoke?" said the visitor.

"Maseba is burning his grass very late!"

Here the lady murmured something to the clergyman about rain.

"Pray for rain!" he exclaimed. "Certainly, Joseph and I will pray together. It is needed badly."

Still the clouds of smoke in the distance rolled up towards the sky.

At the entrance to the wattle plantation was a little church, the door of which was always kept open.

Inside the Umfundisi and little Joseph knelt praying for rain.

Still the smoke from Maseba's kraal rolled ominously.

I would like to ride over and see how they burn grass," the Inkosazana's brother said.

"Certainly!" said his host, "We'll saddle up at once! Joseph shall fetch the horses."

Half-an-hour later Joseph stood with the reins in his hand waiting. The horses were pawing the ground and champing their bits. The little boy looked downcast and wretched.

"What is the matter?" the Umfundisi asked kindly.

Joseph, for answer, burst into tears.

"I am nokiwe (frightened) for old Nerea. The witch doctor has smelt her out." He sobbed out his fears to his friends, and was comforted.

"They would never dare to do harm to Nerea in these days," the Umfundisi said. "The police and the Resident Magistrate are too vigilant."

Still the district is a large one, and they could if they dared, his brother-in-law suggested.

The smoke now was dying away. As the Umfundisi drew near to Maseba's kraal, the murmur of voices as of a great multitude was borne on the breeze. When they rounded the shoulder of the hill, they saw a crowd of natives gathered together in the mealie gardens. They were surrounding a smouldering object. The Umfundisi put spurs into his horse and galloped recklessly down the slope.

Was that object a human frame? No, it could not be! They dare not!

The object tottered over and fell into the flames. The Inkosazana's brother struggled to get close to the Umfundisi, as with uplifted whip, and flashing eye, he pushed in amongst the crowd of semi-savages, threatening, upbraiding and denouncing fearlessly. The visitor felt anxious lest they should turn on that solitary heroic figure. But the crowd broke up, and many—total heathen and quasi-Christian—slunk off in the confusion. The Umfundisi kept Maseba at his stirrup, and dared him to move, while his brother-in-law rode back and met a Christian induna who spoke English. The induna went off at a swinging trot for the police.

When the police came two hours after it was pouring with rain. Maseba was quite submissive and broken.

"Wai babo!" he said, "Your words, umfundisi, sting like whip-cords. Let the Government and the Umkulukulu punish me. I go!"

CHAPTER II.

FOR BETTER OR WORSE.

uSIJUBA ran right away when the police came to arrest his father, Maseba. He dared not go back to his kraal in case the police should come again and take him prisoner. Where should he go? What should he do? He thought of taking shelter in Jan's stables and sleeping with the mules. He was rather fond of the mules, and they, at least, would be company. But the boy was afraid to cross the river and the bush beyond because of the ghosts. He crouched down in the tangle of weeds and undergrowth in the old mealie garden and shivered. Every time he shut his eyes he could see the Umfundisi, his face lit up by the flames, and his eyes flashing. His words rang in the boy's ears. "You are murderers, and idolators, every one of you! How dare you injure the old and feeble? The Umkulunkulu will visit you for this until you learn the error of your ways and repent. The old days of darkness are passed, the light has shined, and your ignorance is wilful!"

He did not understand the words although they rang in his ears, but he could not forget the manner of the Umfundisi. There was no getting away from the fact that the Umfundisi had power, and it is in the blood of the Zulus to worship Power. He felt the power of the Umfundisi, an indescribable air of superiority and authority which commands the deference, if not fear, of the Zulu people. It often seems that some European nations exalt the reverence and sympathy with weakness into a worship. If only a person is weak, poor, inefficient, it is then the self-imposed duty of many civilised individuals to pay them homage, and cry "Down with rulers, powers, authorities, dignitaries, drag in the dust every ancient decency and order—down with everything and everyone to make way for the exaltation of the weak, despised, and oft-times deservedly poor."

uSijuba, as he lay in the mealie garden, was fully two thousand years behind the stump orator in Trafalgar Square or Hyde Park. He had not seen many civilised people in his

time, the only token of association, was the corpulent white man's waistcoat he wore. Even that he had bought of a Zulu storekeeper, and it had suggested no idea of a white man to him—he had never seen a white man wear one. It is only a Zulu who can be dignified in rags, because their significance does not reach his inner consciousness. Put a white man in a ragged waistcoat many sizes too big for him and he will wear a hang-dog look; his sense of decency will be violated, and will be expressed in the carriage of his shoulders, and the cast of his countenance. It was not so with uSijuba; there was a latent dignity about him which clung to the old waistcoat, and redeemed it from the ludicrous. Alas! for the day when he should learn to associate shame and scorn with a tattered garment still useful to him, and should not have sufficient means, or be capable of earning them, to supply himself with broad-cloth, or what seems to him decent apparel. The trend of civilisation is to increase his demands, and not to give him the honest means of supply. Surely it would be better to do without honesty and simplicity. We civilised people have been slaves to desires which are not honestly necessary to our happiness or well-being; hence comes the cry for a simple life. "Away with luxury and sophistry! Let us get back to the simple life, to mother earth, to the heart of things. Let us live in a cottage with whitewashed walls, and dig and delve in a garden! Let us get up with the sun and go to bed with the sun, tired and happy like little children. We would get nearer to Our Father and his purpose concerning us."

Of all the cries that have ever been surely this is the most honest! We seem to see the civilised people of the earth leaving the cities and going into the depths of a great primeval forest, and there in the sobered light learning self-control and primitive dignity, such as the Zulus possess. These are points which semi-savages could give us, if we would; and there are very many of us who fear the significance of this.

uSijuba dared not go through the bush; he fled up the hillside, and then along the ridge. He was afraid of ghosts, and he knew not what besides He was afraid where no fear was, but undisciplined mysticism, or that part of his nature which was intended to bring him nearer to his God, not having fulfilled its purpose becomes a curse and a hindrance.

uSijuba sprang along, very erect, with his light springing step, and wide staring eyes, the voluminous waistcoat

flapping around his figure. He shouted out to the spirits of his ancestors, keeping up a weird chant as he travelled. The boy went down by the stream, and held his arms up towards the heavens as he plunged through the rushing water, shouting,

"Oh, Inkosikazi y Zulu, stand by me!"

The water surged and tumbled around him, and the stronger the flood the fiercer the quasi-religious fervour of uSijuba.

Still the boy pranced and shouted, and rolled his eyes, and gesticulated wildly, twisting and twirling his stick above his head. His shouts reached the verandah of the mission house, where the Rev. Hugh Neville sat smoking his after-dinner cigar.

The young man was tired, and the enthusiasm with which he had denounced Maseba and his adherents gave place to an intense pity for their lot. Hugh was a benevolent man, and, after the passion had expended itself, he was very sorry for them. He pictured Maseba, with his dignified carriage and his lithe, graceful body, nearly naked except for his umutya, and the goat's hide he wore at the back. They were neighbours, and had many ties in common. For many years they had dwelt side by side, each accepting many kindnesses from the other. Old Maseba was certainly " a bit of a rascal," but his face always lit up when Hugh appeared. Hugh could not be reconciled to the old man's better nature being given up to witchcraft and all the other "tomfoolery," as he called it. Living in such a beautiful country as Zululand, and so close to nature, he should have been living near to Nature's God, instead of being in a fog. The beauties of his surroundings were hidden from him.

"Fancy living near that beautiful natural bush with its fine indigenous trees, and its lovely colouring and effects, and only being moved to people it with umtakati, with hideous goblins and devilish togoloshes! Ugh! And yet, poor benighted fool ——."

Hugh knocked off the ashes of the cigar with a gesture of impatience. He held out the cigar at arm's length and then took a luxurious puff. He was thinking of many things more than could be expressed in words.

"Light and darkness!" he said almost aloud. "Most expressive symbols! And yet do I deserve the light any more than he? Who am I that I should feel the knowledge and love of the Divine Being throbbing within me, a part of my

life, a part of myself, and he and they should be in outer darkness?" The pathetic shouting of uSijuba was borne up to the verandah. Hugh sprang up, and the next second tore down the little garden path, jumped over the tangle and clumps of long grass beyond, and then ran down the slope to the stream. The black clouds of the storm had rolled away eastward and seaward, there was a fresh crispness in the air, a silver moon hung in a pale violet sky, against which the dark trees of the bush were silhouetted, and the river like a rumpled silver ribbon twisted and tumbled from the heights above. In the centre of the drift uSijuba was struggling, and shouting out his wild fantastic cries to the spirits to bring him into a path of safety.

It is astonishing with what energy the heathen can pray; with what fervour of devotion they will wrestle with the powers above them. "Oh, give us light! Oh, give us peace! we beg, we yearn, we groan for the satisfaction of the consciousness of Thy goodwill towards us." So thought Hugh as he paused and watched the youth.

Yet the majestic message is sounding throughout the world, "Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." Who am I that in the background of my awakening intelligence and consciousness there should have always been this to tone my life and mould my opinions?" In a sense of extreme unfitness, Hugh called. "uSijuba, my good fellow, can I do anything for you?"

The boy scrambled out of the water and stood shivering and trembling on the bank.

"Oh, umfundisi," he said, "there was a big serpent seventeen yards long just where you stand, and would not let me come out of the water, and I feared I was going to be drowned. You have frightened it away!"

The boy's eyes were glazed and staring, and he was trembling and afraid.

"Yes," said Hugh soothingly, "I have frightened him away. Nothing can hurt you now. Come up to my house and get warm. There is bound to be some food in the kitchen."

Hugh led the way, and the native gained courage and confidence in the contemplation of the white man's broad shoulders and manly gait. The natives admired Hugh immensely, and indirectly that was useful in the success of his mission. Hugh found himself talking to the youth, encouraging him, and caring for him, thinking for him and

with him, as if he were a little child who had been afraid of the dark.

uSijuba raked together the kitchen fire, which was nearly out, and soon had a bright blaze, and then—Oh, the cleverness of Hugh—he said he would like some cocoa, and uSijuba had better make him some, and he showed him how.

The boy thought it a great honour to do anything for his preserver. His face brightened, his normal happy temperament reasserted itself.

Hugh poured himself out a cup, and handed back the jug and its contents to uSijuba.

"Drink that," he said, and, opening a box which stood near the study table, he took out a loaf on a trencher, then he went to some shelves by the open fire place, and rummaged for a knife, and cut a thick slice of bread, which he gave to the native.

Hugh Neville's domestic arrangements were of a very primitive order. This was a dining-room and study all in one, a small whitewashed bedroom with a camp bedstead, and a bucket in the centre of the floor to catch the drippings from the roof. A lean-to at the back formed the kitchen.

After uSijuba had finished eating he knocked at the study door with the tips of his fingers. His mental equilibrium was entirely restored.

He squatted down on the corner of Hugh's carpet square, with his goat's hide spread out behind him, and his knees showing through the arm holes of his huge waistcoat.

"Oh, Baba, Inkosi! I am your servant," he said. "You may kill me, but I still love you. I have no father but you, to you only I give my allegiance, and you only will I obey."

He saluted gravely, and then paused with his head bowed.

Hugh pushed aside the book he was reading and felt his colour rising. To do him justice he felt very awkward. He waved aside the compliments and the flattery, but he could not extinguish the devotion and admiration of the young man before him, he knew instinctively.

He did not deserve it, he was not able to live up to its expectations. Yet, what was to be done?

CHAPTER III.

A PROBLEM.

WHAT was to be done?

Hugh got up and thrust both hands into his trousers pockets and made the stride towards the window. From that position he turned and surveyed the problem before him, uSijuba squatting in a frenzy of attachment just inside the door of Hugh's room. For it was a problem! The more the young man thought of it the more he realised the significance of the situation. uSijuba was denouncing his father and his past life, and was attaching himself to Hugh. Hugh was Christianity in the concrete to uSijuba. Abstract theories were nothing to him, but practical interpretation was.

"Do you wish to become a believer?" Hugh asked diffidently, rattling his keys and small change. (He never had much of the latter.)

"I do not wish to believe," uSijuba said, "but I wish to keep close to my baba, the umfundisi."

"Suppose that by keeping close you learn to believe. What then? I am a very imperfect specimen of Christianity, God knows, but Christianity is contagious. . . . I knew a Jew once who assimilated a great deal of Christianity without knowing it. . ."

This last sentence *sotto voce.*

"I do not understand the umfundisi, but I wish to keep close that is all," the young native said.

"How about Jan and the mules," Hugh exclaimed after a pause.

"Jan will get another amuntu; I do not wish to work for Jan."

"Come now," said Hugh, giving the keys a sudden vigorous rattle, "Did you not promise Jan you would work for him?"

"No," the youth said, "my baba, Maseba, promised for me, and the money I earned was his, not mine. Now it is a

different matter. I have no baba but the umfundisi, and I will do as he says."

Hugh turned and looked out at the stars, and away went his thoughts far beyond the stars, and his desires went with them.

"uSijuba," said he, after a pause, I am going to say a prayer for you and for me. This is an important matter. Then we will say good night, and sleep."

The young man knelt down without more ado on a well-worn patch on the carpet which told its own tale, and uSijuba fell forward with his forehead touching the ground.

Hugh said in his usual impressive manner—a native was once heard to remark that the umfundisi prayed as if he were alive—the second collect at evening prayer in Zulu.

"And that we being delivered from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness."

"Good night!" said Hugh with freshened good humour. Some people when they pray seem cross for some time after, perhaps it is a burden of extreme "holiness" under which they are suffering, but Hugh was not one of those people.

His face was radiant, and he smiled reassurance and beneficence into the black boy's countenance. Some gleam of reflected happiness lit up the native's face for one second, then he slithered away to the native servants' quarters. Hugh turned in, too. It was "Good-night," although the rain rattled into the bucket into Hugh's room, and the wind shook the windows. At the back of Hugh's house was a fertile valley. Next morning he was busy at work hoeing potatoes on the slopes. He was accosted by Roy Murchison, who shouted to him from the stile by the wattle plantation.

"You early bird! Did'ems catch all the little worms? Bless his little heart! Toiling by the sweat of his brow so early in the morning, too."

"Stop gassing, and some down and help a fellow," laughed Hugh.

"I shall do nothing of the sort, I am too clean, and too lazy, I'll have you to observe. I've strolled over to tell you that you are wanted by the police."

Roy said this with a fine air, and Hugh shouldered his hoe and joined him.

"There's a real live policeman waiting in the study for you."

They walked towards the house.

"What!" said Roy a moment later, "You don't mean to say that you work two hours before breakfast! I should never do for a missionary, I love the comforts and luxuries of life too much."

"I know something that you love a great deal more . . . . . The satisfaction that comes from following the dictates of conscience. I am very selfish in that way too."

They had arrived together at the door of the kitchen. uSijuba's voice was heard discoursing to the other natives. Roy, not knowing the language, would have gone on, but Hugh stopped him with a gesture, and an expression of half laughing incredulity.

"Listen!"

uSijuba was telling the boys how the umfundusi had fought the huge snake seventeen yards long which lived by the stream and had killed him.

"'Sijuba," he said severely, "how can you make up such stories?"

The native was unabashed.

"Indeed you did, Nkosi," he said politely. "You hit him with a stick until he was dead."

"'Sijuba! you know I had no stick."

"Oh, Nkosi, forgive me," said the boy earnestly, "but the snake swallowed the stick. I saw it."

"Very well," said Hugh quietly. "You are making a great mistake. We will all go down to the stream, and if the snake's body or the skin is left then uSijuba speaks the truth, and if not then we know that he imagined it."

"Ehe!" said the assembled natives, "It is well spoken, inkosi."

Hugh translated the story for the mounted policeman and Roy in the study.

"What abominable liars they are!" said Roy.

"No, I do not think so," Hugh replied.

"The native is brought up in an air of mysticism, until he begins thoroughly to believe in the creations of his own imagination. There are many Europeans like that, too, and I have known and heard of children particularly who are slaves to a fantastic imagination."

The mounted policeman had many more stories about the natives in the same strain.

"I once knew a native who was fading away, and getting thinner every day, because he believed he had been bewitched by another man."

"Well, what happened?" said the English visitor, Roy.

"I daresay he would have died," said the N.P. "only he met the Archdeacon, who talked to him and persuaded him that he would not die, and he began to get better. I believe the Archdeacon told him that the muti was not strong enough."

"Didn't he rather pander to the man's fancies?" asked downright Roy.

"In a way, but you have to treat them like children," Hugh said.

"But the man was a Christian convert," the N.P. commented. "That shows how little their hearts are touched by Christianity, doesn't it?" I doubt if they ever will really become converted."

Hugh drew himself up to his full height, and folded his arms, and, instead of being angry or hurt, he only smiled until his face looked particularly handsome and attractive.

"They are little babies in Christianity yet," he said, "and little babies can't walk, they can only crawl; they look to us older white people to guide them and help them along. But many white people push them aside angrily. Why do you stumble and fall, why ever in the world can't you walk upright, even as we? The natives are not unnatural children, they are groping and stretching out hands for us to guide and lead them into the ways of peace, . . . *only some of us won't.*"

The trooper, who was really a decent fellow at heart, never afterwards ran down missionaries, although he could not always follow their methods.

"Oh, for goodness sake leave the poor devils of missionaries alone, and let every man live according to his conscience," he said later when some men at the police camp were sharpening their wits and using up their sarcasm on the failure of the Christian "babies" to walk steadily."

"However," said Hugh, "let us go down to the stream and look for the serpent's skin."

"Rather!" Roy said, "You don't presume to think that I will be dead in this act!"

The charm of Roy's personality was that he was keen about everything. He, being fresh from England, was keen about the black men.

uSijuba saw the trooper's khaki uniform through the study door, and he made as if to clear over the hillsides and

be gone, but Hugh guessed his intention and held up his hand.

"I want you," he said. "The police don't."

uSijuba stood gravely ready to do as his "baba" suggested, although he was terribly afraid of the policeman. The expression on his face seemed to say, "Though I am killed for it, yet I will obey you!"

A movement was made towards the stream. The natives in the kitchen followed in a body, and a few loiterers on the road came up too.

Hugh led the way, and the N.P. and Roy followed, the natives bringing up the rear.

"Can you not see," said Hugh, with glowing eyes, "what a beautiful country it is in which you live?" He turned and faced the natives for a moment. "The green hills, the purple mountains in the distance, with the light on them never two days alike, then the remains of this beautiful forest, and the sparkling sunshine, and the oceans of fresh air that you have all to yourselves! Is it all lost on you?"

"Ehe, Nkosi," said an intelligent man. "We know it is a good land, but there are many dangers that trouble us; we have sickness and famine, and many evils which must be the work of the evil spirits. See, Maseba's mealies were washed away last night!"

He pointed with the sticks he carried to the distant hillside, where a black patch of bare earth was showing where the verdant green mealies had been.

"Wai mame!" "Maye!" exclaimed the natives. "The mealies have gone."

Hugh paused for a second.

"Do you not see that the Unkulunkulu will not accept the sacrifice of Nerea to appease the evil spirits?"

Joseph's face lit up, and several other natives murmured assent.

"No," said Hugh with grave earnestness, "you do not see the wonders around you, unless you are enlightened. The peace, beauty and happiness of life are hidden from you until you believe. . . . . Now for uSijuba's snake!" He burst through the tangle of brushwood, followed by the two white men and the natives.

"Where is he?" he asked as they came to the drift. "Look well, in case I should be mistaken!"

The natives gathered round, suspiciously at first, but

then, encouraged by Hugh, they searched through the bushes and the tangle of grass.

"Oh, go on looking," Hugh said, "for so big a snake could not be carried away by the ants. Search!"

One by one the natives gave it up, until only uSijuba was left hunting. Roy and the policeman stood apart and whispered together.

At last uSijuba's hands hung motionless, and a puzzled look settled on his face.

"Well?" interrogated Hugh.

"I cannot see him, Nkosi," the boy said, "but I know he was here," he went on eagerly.

"Yes," said Hugh, "you thought he was! We often think things that are not true. The heathen do that, and God waits for us to see the truth. Nothing has altered in the bush since last night, scarcely a leaf or a twig has moved. You made it horrible, when it was not really so!"

Slowly uSijuba smiled and assented.

"God made the world beautiful, and man makes it horrible," went on Hugh. God has peace and goodwill for all of you. . . . Lift up your hearts to seek him!"

That and a great deal more was the impromptu sermon Hugh preached.

CHAPTER IV.

MARGARET.

"I AM sorry I can't invite you in to breakfast," whispered Hugh to Roy, "because the bread has gone mouldy, and I forgot to order any butter. I wanted to ask Wilson, too, but he says he has had breakfast."

"That's all right, Neville," Roy said smiling. "You are not a bit self-sufficing! Why don't you get married?"

This last was said with deference, for the too men liked and appreciated each other immensely.

"I should like to get married awfully, only . . ." Hugh paused.

Roy, in his youthful conceit, with which he was generous enough, or misapprehensive enough, to endow his friend likewise, could not understand why Neville did not manage it.

"After breakfast," said Trooper Wilson, "Will you and Joseph come over to the Court to give evidence against Maseba?"

By this time they were on the drive which led to the stables, not to the homestead, as it should.

Roy said, "You must come in to breakfast." Hugh did not want to.

"Anyone would think you were afraid of the ladies!" Roy said.

The red-roofed school buildings, looking softened and picturesque against the background of tall trees, stood back from the homestead.

In the wide porch stood Margaret Murchison, a tall, graceful figure in a dainty blue cotton gown. Her bright brown hair, which ought to have been dressed becomingly, was dragged back from the wide forehead. When she smiled one realised there was something wanting, just as one, looking into a painted landscape, feels the miss of the fresh air, and scent of the flowers. Margaret's beauty was suggestive and incomplete. She ought to have been a glorious woman with that hair and those eyes; the hair was twisted up anyhow, it seemed, to be out of the way, and, although her

goodness met one on the threshold, as it were, there was a lack of fulness and tone about her personality.

There are few of us what we ought to be, but many of us are what we can be, that is to say, we live as much as is in our power.

Hugh's manner altered at the breakfast table. The priest and missionary about him overruled all the rest.

Trooper Wilson subsided into a chair, and had some more tea and a roll.

Roy kept up a stream of nonsense, making them laugh about the snake, which Hugh was supposed to have killed. He sat between Barbara Harrison, a bright little dark-eyed woman in the uniform of a nursing sister, and Kate Broughton, who taught in the girls' school. "You will remember from henceforth, it was Sir Hugh who killed the dragon, not St. George!" Roy said.

"When I go Home I am going to call on the Bevises, at Lancaster Gate, and tell them the story of Sir Hugh and the dragon. Doris and Cicily Bevis were always dead nuts on Hugh, the fashionable West End curate who gave up a promising career, and a possible bishopric, to become a missionary to the dear little black boys, bless 'em!"

Margaret arrested herself in the middle of a laugh to observe, "I hope you will tell them how necessary missionary work is, and that you had a picture of the blackness of heathenism in the killing and burning of poor Nerea."

Unconsciously Hugh took his cue from Margaret. He, too, stopped laughing when she did, but Roy was irrepressible.

"I shall certainly hold a meeting and send out a consignment of moral pocket handkerchiefs," he said gravely.

Hugh nearly choked in his endeavours to smother a laugh, in deference to Margaret's manner.

The N.P. thought how tremendously good people must be to be missionaries.

"I hope my brother does not shock you," Margaret said, smiling sweetly at Hugh.

The young man felt that all the colour had gone out of the flowers on the table, and that the morning was grey and chill. It was not really. The sun was shining gloriously as the manner of the sun is in Zululand, and the vases of petunias were gorgeous with generous masses of colour.

Hugh always thought it his duty and pleasure to support Margaret, and she considered herself under an obliga-

tion to defend his position. They were each on the defensive with each other, and she with all the world.

She was quite conscious that Trooper Wilson at the present moment thought them absolute idiots (missionaries were always fools), so she laid herself out to be particularly smiling and pleasant to him, pressing him to have more tea and home-made jam.

"No, thank you," said the N.P., nervously, thinking what a beautiful woman she was, and yet how she repressed him.

Work at Ekuseni was ordered by the clock, there was little time for lengthy discussions and pleasant self-expansion. A bell rang somewhere, and away scrambled the ladies of the mission to the different posts in the school. Barbara Harrison, with her bright brown eyes and pretty bird-like movements, flirted openly with the policeman, and then flitted away to the medicine cupboard to interview the out-patients who squatted around.

"It's dirt that you suffer from, most of you," she said with a fine air. "These sores and rashes are caused through dirt. You don't deserve the gifts of fine constitutions and healthy skins." She rated them roundly. "The girls at the school have at least learnt that lesson. Here's some ointment! Now, go away and be clean. You can come tomorrow for more muti, and then I shall expect you to bring me a fowl to pay for the treatment."

Two or three days later the same natives brought a fowl, a woman hugging it in her arms, while the husband presented it.

The men rode into the little hamlet seven miles away, where the Magistrate lived and the Court was held, taking small Joseph with them.

In the girls' school the busy hum of lessons went on all the morning. Margaret, freed from the restraint and constraint of the others' presence, sat before her class with a radiant face, imparting and instructing in the religion which was life and peace to her. In such moments as these when surrounded by the sober native girls, each eagerly drinking in the knowledge of truth and righteousness, to which Margaret justly thought that they had as much right of freehold as she, or any other white person, Margaret felt the loneliness and isolation, and misapprehension of colonial neighbours, was as nothing in comparison with the joy of handing on to others their birthright.

In such moments as these Hugh met her, as on this particular morning when she had dismissed the girls to their secular lessons, and he came to speak to her about the financial business of the mission. Margaret was no good at business. She hated it, and that is just where Hugh scored. The ethereal light in her beautiful eyes humiliated him, and at the same time held him as with a spell.

Margaret did not know herself to be beautiful, neither did she know that she was not as happy as she might have been. How strange it is that many of us are intended to be a great deal happier, even in this world, than we are. We ward off blessedness, and, as completely one happy person makes all others they come in contact with, happier and better, we stifle our powers of usefulness, and fail in fulfilling the glorious destiny that was intended for us. Margaret was a conscientious woman, but she did not allow her conscience to direct her to as much happiness as she ought to have done. It was happiness and complete usefulness, against extreme goodness and self-repression.

She watched Hugh riding away across "the short cut" to join the other men.

"What a dear, brave fellow he is, and so loyal and tender-hearted! I feel worthless compared to him. He does not seem to find life so hard and angular as I. But, dear me, I must not complain. Have I not the joy of service? He has the joy of service, too . . . Still there seems something wanting."

It was very seldom that Margaret acknowledged even to herself that there was anything wanting in her life. If ever she realised the incompleteness or repression, she satisfied herself by crying out that life was meant to be so, and that even the Bible said that all was vanity neath the sun.

Margaret retired to her room, and prayed and meditated. She came out pale and tired, with great black rings under her eyes, and set her back resolutely against the direction Hugh had taken.

She found the native girls difficult to handle that morning; in fact, if she had stopped to consider it, they always were less responsive when she was in such a mood. The Zulus are children of Nature, and just when Margaret was congratulating herself on accepting and abiding by the vanity and vexation of spirit, and carried it about with her in her manner, the girls were irritated into insubordination.

One girl refused flatly to do what she was told.

"Take up your work at once, or I shall beat you, Lydia," insisted Margaret.

"Who is the inkosazana that her will should be obeyed?" muttered the girl.

"What did you say?" said Margaret, grieved that a girl who could answer so nicely in Scripture should show such a spirit.

Lydia refused to answer, and Margaret very wisely did not insist, only she stood by the girl until the work was sullenly finished. Lydia would have been quite good looking if she had been white. She was a lithe graceful creature, with a smooth, soft skin, and fine eyes and teeth. Margaret had real regard for Lydia, she was generally docile and happy, and learned readily.

It was altogether one of Margaret's difficult days. Poor Margaret!

CHAPTER V.

IN THE CITY.

JAN was very angry. He was in the bar of the hotel running down missionaries.

"Its allers the same," said Jan, holding out his glass at arm's length preparatory to taking an enjoyable drink of the "dop" he had ordered. "Before the missionary gets hold of him uSijuba was a nice quiet workable boy, now he runs away and leaves me in the lurch, and this morning when I comes to them first stables, I have to water and harness up them dem mules myself. Says I, uSijuba is sick, or wants fagaash. I'll fagaash him with a sjambok when he comes! Here's my cart with His Majesty's royal mails, and I had as much as I could do to catch up time. There was an umfana from Maseba's kraal hanging round. Sez he to me, uSijuba has gone to work for the Umfundisi. Then I swore at the Umfundisi and all the missionaries in the country. They are a curse, says I."

"Yes," assented a fat Dutch farmer who sat in the corner. "They teach the nigger to think a lot of himself and cheek his betters!"

A young man who served at the neighbouring native store, and was always running in for a drink when his master's back was turned, now supported Jan and the Dutchman.

"Give me a real raw kafir, who knows nothing of the white man. You can kick him, abuse him, cheat him, and he takes it all in good part. Serve him right too, being such a fool. Let him once get near the missionaries, and he thinks he's as good as me."

Trooper Wilson, who was quenching his thirst in a great hurry, put down his glass and laughed.

"Yes," he said, "as good as you!"

"Where's the joke?" snarled the young man from the store, while the others laughed.

"There is no joke," said Trooper Wilson gravely, preparing to depart. "You said he thinks himself as good as

you, perhaps he does. You have so often troubled his womenfolk, especially the more civilised and cleaner of them, that I should not wonder if he does." Wilson departed midst dead silence.

"Look here, Brownie," the comfortable looking barman, who sometimes went to church, and saw no harm in it, said: "You don't suppose that the Rev. Mr. Neville teaches the natives to cheek their betters?"

"Well, I wouldn't employ a Christian native to work for me if I was paid for it. A Christian native! I'd like to meet a native who was really converted!" The young man called for another glass and sneered. "When once a native woman puts on a skirt she's bad."

Jan and the other men did not disprove this.

"So Maseba is put in gaol for being implicated in the murder of an old woman at his kraal. Serve the old rascal right!"

"He will get several years for that," Jan said.

Then the assembled company talked of the burning of Nerea.

The clerk of the court, who had strolled in, told them there was some flaw in the evidence. In the talk that followed the stout barman leaned over and said to Jan:

"uSijuba did not run away from you," you see. "He was at the burning, and he was afraid of the police. Naturally he ran away to the Umfundisi, whom he felt to be a friend."

"Mr. Neville brought him in to-day to give his evidence," put in the clerk of the court. "He is too young to be responsible."

Several of the men, like Trooper Wilson, were too busy to loiter. The litle "City," as the inhabitants jocularly called the little hamlet, was thrown into a state of unusual interest in native affairs; for, as a rule, white people took little notice of their black neighbours, except to make use of them when they wanted work done, and after that to forget every responsibility towards them. Yet, they were not all bad or utterly selfish people in the City. There were men and women with some right feeling, who were good and kind to their white neighbours, and even spasmodically considerate to their black servants. The difficulty was that scarcely anybody except one or two officials at the court spoke the Zulu's real language; even the police and the jailor only knew "kitchen kafir," that is a jargon composed of English,

Dutch, Norwegian, and badly-pronounced Zulu words, hurled at the natives' head, until by some marvellous intuition he is able to grasp its meaning. Almost every white person thinks it beneath his or her dignity to attempt to know the language, or the habits, or customs or ways of thinking of their black neighbours.

"It is the Zulu's business to understand the language, or what other mongrel-language we like to speak, and our ways, and habits, and customs. If he is slow or stupid about this, then we'll hurry him up with the sjambok." That is the public opinion of most of the inhabitants of "The City." There are many such "cities" in Natal and Zululand, and public opinion is very much on the same level. The time will come, nay, is fast upon us, when Public Opinion will be up-lifted, and the whole white population with it.

"God bless my heart," said the fat barman at The Crown Hotel one day. "Public Opinion needs a shove up. We get the off-scourings of all the civilised races of Europe to make a nation of South Africans. Bah!" and the barman made a gesture of disgust towards Jim Brownie, the native store-keeper, who was asleep—dead drunk in a corner. "Take him home!" said the barman to a stalwart Zulu who acted as pot-boy. The huge native grinned, and picked emaciated Jim Brownie up in his arms, as if he were a baby, and carried him to the verandah of the Zulu store, where he deposited the superior white man, and then made a peculiar whistle to a native girl who was passing up the street.

At least the Zulu was a fine animal, with a great deal of latent nobility about him. Who should consolidate it and bring it to the surface? Not white men like Jim Brownie. Meanwhile he slept on.

The Zulu made love to the native girl in his sensual low way, but he was honourable and just, according to his lights, and the girl knew it.

"Suka," she said, "You are not an ikolwa (a believer). I will never choose any man except he is a Christian."

"All right," said the Zulu. "I did not know you were a Christian. I thought you only wore white women's clothes."

He went back to his work, singing, for he was a happy fellow, and seldom lost his temper.

Up the street was the butcher's shop, and beyond that again a low house with a verandah surrounded by shrubs, where the doctor lived. There was also a little iron church, tucked away out of sight as if it were ashamed of being

there; but it had the symbol of the cross mounted high, a symbol which is the solution of many ills in The City; in fact, in many cities

Poor little shabby church, with its paintless, broken cross, and its small congregations, and some half-dozen communicants!—is it not the outward and visible sign of Life in the City—a Life which was meant to be full, rich and unselfish? Perhaps some day, quite soon, too, the citizens will find that they must let their own self-advancement, and the comfort of their own houses wait while the House of God is set in order, and the devotion of their lives will be the seal of their service, and the little church shall be enriched, and unconsciously give back again to the lives and homes of the people.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and running over shall men give into your bosoms."

I am afraid that with honesty I cannot say that the bosoms of the citizens were overflowing with good measure, in those days.

Lydia, for it was she, went up the street to the doctor's with a message. Agnes, another reliable Christian girl, who had come into the City from Ekuseni with her, had stopped at the butcher's with an order. She was kept waiting a minute or two.

An Indian, dressed as a European, made an impertinent remark to Agnes.

"Suka! you dog!" she said, with flashing eyes.

Jim Brownie woke up, shook himself, and struggled to his feet to go up to the hotel for a drink. He met Lydia carrying the medicine from the doctor. She looked clean and neat in her trim black and white check dress and pale blue iduku, a square of soft material she wore on her head.

Having habitually something nice to think about had given her a soft, subdued expression, and a bright, healthy look. She stepped along with her graceful easy gait, until Brownie stopped her.

"How are you?" he asked politely.

"Very well, thank you," said Lydia.

"You look well," said the young man, allowing his eyes to rest with pleasure on her face, and well-rounded figure, and twinkling brown eyes.

Lydia moved uncomfortably. "Will you let me pass?" she said.

"Certainly," said Brownie politely, as if he were speaking to a white lady. "I only wanted to tell you that I have a parcel for Miss Murchison, which I will give you later, as you pass the bush by the tennis court."

"Ehe!" said Lydia, and passed on.

Brownie spoke perfect Zulu, and Lydia knew he was the young man from the store. She was not quite clear in her mind about the different sorts of white people. She felt somehow that all white people were not Christians, yet it puzzled her. Some instinct told her that that Inkosi was not like the Umfundisi, and that type of white man. Still he was white, and one had to obey the white people.

When Agnes, with the parcel of meat in the basket on her head, joined her, they had a consultation.

"Perhaps Miss Murchison ordered something and did not tell us?" Lydia said.

"I don't think so," said Agnes. "Besides, Miss Murchison never sends us to the store of that Inkosi, and she said we were to be sure and not speak to any man, except the Doctor and the Butcher."

"He was very polite," said Lydia.

"They are," sniffed Agnes, scornfully. "They like us because we are clean, and have not the dirty habits of the heathen."

"Why did you come to school, Agnes?" Lydia next asked.

"Some years ago," said Agnes, and her story is a true one, "my father moved to Delagoa Bay. As my sisters grew up, my mother sold them in turns to be concubines of Portuguese. When my turn came, and the man came to arrange with my mother about it, I ran away. I travelled by night and day up hill and down dale, through a fever country, until I came to an English mission. There was no school for girls, so the native priest sent me to Ekuseni in charge of an induna.

"Were you not frightened? poor Agnes!" Lydia said.

"Oh, I am frightened of the white men," said Agnes.

By this time they were at the back of the tennis courts, walking along the road which skirted the bush.

When the girls were out of sight of people in the City, Jim Brownie, much refreshed by his drink, appeared in the tangle of scrub and long grass. He held a parcel in his hand.

"It is for Miss Murchison," he said loftily, when the girls made as if they would take no notice of him.

"Qa!" said Agnes, stalking on like a young queen with the basket of meat on her head.

"If it is for the Inkosazana, she will send for it," Lydia called back.

Away on the horizon, in a fold of the mountains, were the trees, in which seemed to nestle the church and buildings of the Mission Station.

The girls arrived in good time for evensong. First Lydia, in a business-like way, prepared the leg of mutton for the oven and cooked it, and also made some apple fritters. A smaller girl sat on the kitchen floor preparing the vegetables. Other girls passed the open window with hoes and rakes; they had been working on the land.

There was a busy hum of laughter and chatter as the girls got rid of their soiled garments, and made themselves fresh and clean for evensong. What a happy life was theirs!

"Each morning saw some task begun,
Each evening saw its close."

Margaret, lying prostrate in her darkened room with a bad headache, and waited on by soft black hands, felt the blessedness of having trained the girls to be useful and unselfish.

They were faulty, weak and erring, but ever striving to get nearer to the Great Ideal, which was constantly set before them.

"What did you see in the City, Lydia?" said fat Dinah, "the potato girl" who sat on the floor.

"We saw some of the people who sit in darkness, and the white people who are not believers . . ., but hurry up with those potatoes and don't chatter so much, Dinah."

Miss Broughton looked in at the open kitchen door.

"I hope you girls are cooking the dinner all right. I don't know much about cooking. It is not my indaba. Lydia, you must be the induna, remember all Miss Murchison has told you, and keep the girls up to their work."

The girls laughed encouragingly.

"Yebo! Inkosazana," they said.

Meanwhile Hugh, full of fire and enthusiasm, was holding a service in the shabby little church in the City. What, there were five, six, no, seven people in the Wednesday evening's congregation. The fat barman, looking rather sheepish

and ashamed, sat just inside the door. There was the doctor's wife, well up to the front, and Trooper Wilson in a grey tweed suit, three half-caste children, who fidgetted and dropped the books about, and Hugh, tall and muscular, with kindling, searching blue eyes, and his whole nature full of devotion and benevolence. Surely he had good measure in his life, brimful and flowing over. He went on giving and unconsciously receiving a hundred-fold.

CHAPTER VI.

A SETTLEMENT.

"I HAVE sent for you," said Hugh, "because I feel that you and I must come to some proper understanding."

"Ehe!" assented uSijuba.

While most of the important things in life, I suppose, happen under a roof in England, in South Africa many of the incidents which go towards weaving the plan of life have place under the sky. It seems natural so. The sunshine, brightness, and warmth induced the old natives to hold their izindaba (councils), their courts of justice, their worship, such as it was, their feeding places, their forges, under the sky. The huts were used to be ill in, to take shelter from rough weather, to sleep in, and perhaps to die in. The upright Zulus crawled into their huts, and squatted or lay about inside them. To have a house, and to carry on the business of life in a house, as we do, and it to be an occasion of comment or interest to leave the house, to go out into the world, as we, was unknown to them. They are essentially a houseless people, and South Africa is more or less a houseless country, in the sense that life, the greater part of it, takes place under the sky. Hundreds of houses there are with doors and windows wide open, solid stone houses comfortably furnished, with verandahs, in which people can allow the desire to be out to take a modified trend, houses in which two-thirds of the day you will find the inhabitants out of doors, on the verandah, in the garden, or even farther afield.

The call of the climate is "Come out!" and unconsciously the whole population more or less responds. Mothers cannot keep their children "in the house," and on wet days they complain that they do not know what to do with them. Bigger girls and boys wander "out" perhaps beyond the reach of home influence, alas! and, unless that influence is a strong, good one, their characters suffer from want of consolidation, and they become flighty, careless, gay and empty headed.

Take the ordinary children of the same class in England; the boys will have many stay-at-home hobbies, fretwork, carpentery, reading, or what-not; and the girls steady pleasure in work of another sort or kind. Homes take on a deeper colouring in the tone of the personality which clings to them. How many South African homes are almost colourless, or lacking in individuality? The same scarcely more than necessary articles of flimsy furniture, bentwood chairs, linoleum-covered floor, houses empty of the consolidated interest that gives life to rooms in English homes of the same class.

The cry of nature in South Africa, to which the children, so near to nature, are the first to respond, that impulse to go out and make friends, become conversant, with the outside world is good, so long as the inward life of the home is a sanctuary, a treasured recess, where the channels of life may be kept sweet and pure, where noble thoughts and fine feelings may be encouraged to take root, and bring forth abundantly.

Alas! Mothers lose control of their girls so soon, and fathers the confidence of their sons. They do not know how they are growing up. It is good sometimes to have spells of wet weather, to make family retreats, if only to enlarge the sphere of the home influence afterwards. Believe me wet days have their uses, although the children are cross, and the South African home seems chill and comfortless in dull weather, and the lack of tone about it is felt to be a depression.

The cry of nature to be "out" had reached Hugh Neville and touched his innermost being. His heart responded. He even took his solid reading and writing to the seat and rough table under the wattle trees. No one could say he lived much in the little thatched cottage; he sheltered there, he slept there, but the greater part of his time he spent out of doors.

He had been barking the wattle trees, and Roy, the Christian natives, and uSijuba, had been working with him. Hugh told uSijuba to run quickly to the house, and tell Alexander the Great to get tea, it being nearly eleven o'clock, and the time when Hugh, in company with many South African people, stopped his ordinary occupation to drink tea, or sometimes coffee.

Alexander the Great was not to be described in a word. He was meant by kindly nature for a humourist, being a

Zulu with a ready wit, an original sense of the ludicrous, and an insouciant laughing countenance. He was Hugh's cook, housekeeper, valet, and "house-boy." The mistakes he made Hugh found edifying, in that they made him laugh, and Hugh liked anything that made him laugh, provided it was honest, clean laughter, and did not hurt anybody. Alexander was a Christian, and took a lusty yet reverent part in the church services

Alexander had a knack of growing out of his clothes, and then enlarging them with material of a contrasting colour. When his work was finished he made himself as melancholy as he could by playing minor refrains on a zither harp. To see his good humoured mouth drawn down at the corners, and his eyes rolled upwards, while he strummed out his tuneless dirges, always made Hugh's eyes twinkle. Alexander was fond of writing love letters to girls, and when, through admiring so many he got into difficulties, he came to Hugh, his master, to help him out.

He was devoted to Hugh, who had his complete confidence.

"Alexander!" said Hugh to him severely one day, "you must get properly engaged, and save your money for lobola, and leave the other girls alone!"

"Ehe! Inkosi!" and Alexander sighed deeply.

The next half-hour he was strutting with a grand air past the school girls, who were filing into church.

There was a murmur of laughter and many jokes at Alexander's expense amongst the girls as he passed. Alexander made a dash at the nearest with his stick.

"Oh, you beautiful naughty creatures!" He drew himself together with a praiseworthy effort, and added, "Ou! I always forget. I must not speak to you." He drew the back of his hand across his mouth, and soberly entered the church.

The sobered look on his honest face never lasted long; a few minutes afterwards he was capering, grimacing, or trying not to, which gave his face a ludicrous expression.

Hugh laughed more than he cared to express, but he always told Margaret that, "Alexander the Great is a very good servant, and I believe harmless. In any case he is not so likely to cause trouble as a sly, quiet boy, but I will forbid him to talk to the girls, as you wish."

The boy listened dutifully to Hugh's remark, and promised accordance. Then he looked puzzled.

"What is it?" Hugh asked.

"I was thinking, Inkosi, how the white men get to know which woman they want to marry, if they never talk to them."

"Who said they never talked to them?" questioned Hugh.

"Oh, Inkosi, please don't think me chicky" (cheeky, impertinent), said Alexander. "My last master was always throwing things at me, because he said I was chicky, but he was a very bad shot, and I didn't mean to be chicky. You tell me it is wicked to speak to the girls, and I do not mean it to be chicky either. I like the girls very much, and by and by I want to marry one of them—not all!" he added vehemently.

Hugh stifled a laugh.

"Alexander," he said, "the inkosazana is taking care of the girls, and she does not want you, or anyone, to trouble them."

"It is a good matter," he said, "but maye babo! how those girls with their artful ways trouble me, inkosi."

Alexander went to the kitchen and mournfully twanged his harp, and Hugh flung himself down, laughing.

The morning that Hugh decided to have a settlement of affairs with uSijuba he sat on the seat talking to Roy, who, by the way, was preparing to leave for Europe in a few days.

"Maseba has five years," said Hugh. "Yesterday the people of the city were actually interested in native affairs. The two shades of life, so to speak, go on side by side, and it is only we missionaries who take an interest in the black side. But the trial has brought the darkened vision of the unenlightened native much before the public, and the citizens are horrified at the depths of Zulu ignorance. I felt that the feeling of dislike and suspicion towards us and our work here at Ekuseni was modified. Think of it!" Hugh laughed in his boyish way. "The Lord of the Manor, Boyce, and several people asked me questions, showing they were really interested in our work here. Did we make the natives work?" Hugh roared.

Alexander the Great, followed by uSijuba carrying a plate of sultana buns (made by Alexander) was arranging the rather rickety table.

Roy offered teasing assistance. He took a delight in upsetting the dignified manner of Alexander when waiting on his master.

"Is there anything else, inkosi?" questioned Alexander gravely.

"No, thanks!" said Hugh. "Only take away the tea cosy. It gets in my way. Those sort of things are women's jimcracks!" he turned to Roy to remark.

Alexander obediently lifted up the cosy.

"May I ask a question, inkosi?"

"What is it?" said Hugh.

"Please, why do the abelungu like to eat out of doors, when they have houses to eat in?"

Roy laughed and Hugh's eyes twinkled.

"Alexander, your mind is developing in strides, too rapidly," he said.

"Because," supplemented Roy, relapsing into hard, and as yet imperfectly learned Zulu, "because abelungu tanda"—damned if I know what's the Zulu for fresh air. "Beka! this! lapa!" and he swung his arm round in space.

"Do you understand what I say?"

"No, Inkosi," said Alexander gravely, in quaintly spoken English, "I do not understand what you say, but I understand what you mean to say!"

Then he walked steadily up to the cottage, and, spying the girls washing clothes by the stream, he put the tea cosy on his head, and performed a sort of cake-walk for their edification.

The young men were not surprised when there were shouts of laughter from the valley behind them, and encouraging cries and exclamations.

Roy strode off to the school to write letters, and Hugh turned once again to uSijuba. "You and I must come to an understanding," he said. "I cannot give you work in the house. I really cannot afford to employ you at all, but if you care to work at the stables I will give you five shillings a month. It is very little. What do you think?"

"I think I will never go away from you, Baba!" said the boy.

"I talked to Jan yesterday about you. He will take you back, and give you fifteen shillings a month. Your father will be five years away from you; by that time you will be rich. Then, again, if you come to me, I think in fairness you had better come to the classes I hold every morning before breakfast for the boys who work about. I think it right you should know about the God who made you, and your duty towards Him."

"It is a good matter my Baba speaks," said uSijuba. "I will come!"

"Then," said Hugh, "I will visit your father in prison, and win his consent to this plan."

Shortly after this Hugh rode into the city and interviewed Maseba in prison. Maseba had never lived in a white man's house, or worked for a white man. He was a well-to-do native who made his sons work for him, consequently he was finding the hard labour that went with his sentence extremely grievous.

He recognised in the Umfundisi a man of power and authority. His heart went out to him accordingly.

His detention in prison had not the desired effect that civilised people intend. There was no shame to him in being in gaol. True, Nerea was dead, but had she not been smelt out? It was only because the white people did not understand that they wished to punish him. His own conscience did not.

Hugh's nature ached for the old man's ignorance.

"I do not resent the white man's power. True, they are the real chiefs now, and one has to obey them. It is well. But the white people do not understand how Nerea was smelt out, and it is the custom of our people that she should die."

Hugh's eyes flashed.

"God has smelt you out, you wicked old man!" he said. Then his manner softened. "Listen, Maseba, I will tell you a story."

CHAPTER VII.

A USE FOR ALEXANDER.

MASEBA lifted his head in pleasurable anticipation. The old native looked out of his element in the convict garb. He had never worn anything on his arms and shoulders before. They had taken his beads, his umutsha and ibetshu, his sticks and his umbrella, without which he did not feel dressed, away from him. They made him wash, and put on trousers, and a rough coat with arrows on it. His legs felt queer in their encasement. He felt for the beads round his neck, the little bag of muti, the snuff spoon from the hole in the lobe of his ear. To submit to the will of the Chief, even if he bade him die, was an instinctive quality, which he inherited as a birthright. The old Zulus never questioned the strangeness of Tschaka's commands, even when he bade his warriors make a big fire as high as a house, and then trample it out with their feet. Cetywayo and Dingaan might tell their men to cross flooded rivers, with forty feet of raging water, or to fight in some battle in which defeat and death were foregone conclusions. They were obeyed, and the Zulu felt himself honourable and glorified in the performance of these acts.

When the white chiefs made Maseba stay in a stone-built house, shut in a cell with other natives, and wear dun-coloured clothes ornamented with broad arrows, which he found uncomfortable, he felt that accepting the will of the white chiefs without complaint was honourable.

Hugh and he were seated together in the quadrangle. Hugh was seated on a chair the jailor brought from the office, nursing his ankle, and slashing anon at his leather gaiters with his riding whip to give emphasis to his remarks.

At a short distance, slouching along with bent head and dejected aspect, in marked contrast to Maseba, who squatted without a tremor of shame at Hugh's feet, was a white man in the same dun-coloured uniform and broad arrows, and, in addition, boots. The significance of the broad arrow, the pompous surveillance of the native constables, entered into

his innermost being. He might be unrepentant, even a scoundrel, but he was miserable.

"Once upon a time," said Hugh to Maseba's expectant look, "there was a fine young Zulu, who went out a-courting."

"Ehe!" and a flash of appreciation beamed on the old man's black face. Did he not just know what that was?

"There was a beautiful Zulu girl living with her father in a kraal forty miles away. She was much sought after by the young men of the district, but she would not let them lobola her, because she had chosen."

"Ehe!" and Maseba made a shrill exclamation of delight. The Umfundisi did understand Zulu well. He talked like a native.

"The beautiful girl, so soft, and round, and plump, with large, full eyes, chose our young Zulu who went out a-courting. He loved her very much. He loved her so, that he felt he could have died for her."

"Ehe!" again commented Maseba, "Some Zulus were like that."

He ventured to remark that the Umfundisi did not give all the details that a Zulu loves. He put several amorous questions, which Hugh waved aside, as not bearing upon the point of the tale.

"This is a Zulu tale, but I am not telling it quite in the way of the natives," said he with authority. Maseba, keen of intuition as all his people—or else how do they understand their language, broken, mangled, and flung at their heads by Europeans as it is—lifted up his mind to grasp the point of view taken by the Umfundisi. It was such an exalted air that he found it uncomfortable, and sighed.

Hugh flashed an intelligence into the bright eyes looking up at him.

"According to the Zulus, this girl was without fault and perfect. They were married."

Maseba expressed delight and satisfaction. He wanted to ask question after question, but a certain air or look about the young white man restrained him.

"She was a faithful wife, according to the Zulus, and bore him children," Hugh went on. "Her children worked for him, and kept him in ease and comfort. There were other wives and other children. The first wife grew old, but the native found her in the way, and (think carefully about this, Maseba), he allowed a witch-doctor to smell her out,

and at her husband's kraal she was killed and burnt. Poor old woman who had loved him so well!"

Hugh stopped and looked steadily at the old man.

"It was most unfortunate!" Maseba said, "but she was smelt out."

"She was your wife!"

There was another flash and challenge of intelligence from Hugh's eyes.

Maseba fidgetted.

"The Zulus have many wives," he said.

"She loved you!" There was almost a trem r in the earnestness of Hugh's voice.

"No, she did not, she was too old. She was of no use. I want a young woman to love me. A girl like Lydia. I have been to see Lydia's father about it, but he said he had allowed her to go to the school to learn, and, having given his permission, he would not take her away."

Hugh sprang to his feet in a fine temper. "Maseba," he said, "Lydia is a Christian, she has been brought up to think of love, differently from you. She is far and away removed from you. Such a marriage is illegal. You have not much more conception of love than a dog, a cat ——." He stopped short, and turned on his heel. "What was the good of it all!" The encounter with Maseba had wearied him, and tried his patience, he felt, beyond endurance.

Hugh had a fine disposition, but a quick, passionate temper. He felt he would like a walk under the wattles, which were showing their tops above the buildings of the jail.

He told the jailor he had some business in the City, and he would come back later.

The jailor, a nice fellow from a midland town in England, fond of cricket football, and, in South Africa, a lover of tennis, had some regard for the native in his custody, in spite of the "kitchen kafir." He was speaking to a policeman.

"The Rev. Neville is a fine sport. It's a pity he does not leave people's religions alone. What does it matter to him, to you, or anyone, what a native believes? They are better left alone!"

Under the wattles the doves were cooing, and the clear air vibrating with the beneficent influences of mother nature. A long-forgotten chant, sung in the old-fashioned

church of Hugh's boyhood, swept into memory, and the words with it:

> "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful unto us;
> That Thy way may be known upon earth; Thy saving health among all nations.
> Let the people praise Thee, O, God; yea, let all the people praise Thee.
> O, let the nations rejoice and be glad, for Thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."

It was strange that memory should serve him thus at that moment! Hugh remembered his boyish incomprehension of the other nations upon earth. He never thought in those days that he would ever come in contact with them. But thus it was! Even old Maseba, sensual yet honourable Zulu that he was, was not born out of the scheme of God's providence, he thought. Even he was born to praise God, and to know His saving health.

He felt normally rested and quieted, when he remembered a letter Lydia had given him to read that morning after church, saying she had received it, and the Inkosazana had told her to take it straight to the Umfundisi.

He took it out of his pocket, and opened it. His face got redder and angrier, and then quite pale.

"Dear Lydia," the letter ran,

"Will you meet me by the wattles on Friday when you "come to the butcher's? I want to talk to you quietly by "yourself. No one can see us there, and I shall be quite "alone. Do not be afraid, for I have seen you often, and "admire you very much.—Yours truly,

"JOE BROWNIE."

A little herd boy was minding some thin cows by the roadside. Hugh called him.

"Go to the store, and tell the Inkosi that someone wants to see him by the wattles. Don't say who!"

"Yebo, Baba!" and the bright little fellow saluted, and made off.

Hugh kept well into the shade, and in a few minutes Joe Brownie came along whistling, his pale, freckled face quite animated.

Hugh waited until he was quite close, and then he stepped out and said quickly,

"It was I who wanted to see you, read that!" He handed Brownie the letter with fine scorn.

Brownie read it, and handed it back.

"Yes," he said, "I wrote it—but what of that?" There's no harm in it! Surely I can make love to a nice ikolwa girl if I like."

"No harm in it!" hissed Hugh. "You liar! What do you want with any native or other girl but to ruin her!" He seized Brownie by the collar, and, before the young man knew what had happened, he felt the sting of Hugh's riding whip across his shoulders through his thin clothes.

"I shall summon you for assault," he said, wiping his brow and gasping, when Hugh flung him aside. "You're a fine minister of religion! It will make a nice scandal, won't it?"

Hugh was walking off. He turned round at this. "I may be a very poor sort of minister, as you say, but, at least, I am a man, and I shall thrash you every time you attempt to interfere with one of our girls. I would leave the Church to do it."

"I shall summon you," whimpered Brownie, "hitting a small man like me!"

When Hugh went back to the jail, Maseba received him with many tokens of respect.

"uSijuba wants to work for me, and I shall teach him all I can to make him a good, honest boy, capable of being a fine man. What do you say to that?"

"The teaching of the Umfundisi cannot do him any harm until I come out of prison, and then I shall want him to work for me to get my lobola. But, Baba," Maseba went on, "If the Government would let him come here and take my place and work for the Government, for I am old, and uSijuba could work better?"

This suggested exchange made Hugh laugh.

"Of course the Government won't take your son instead," he said.

As Hugh was mounting to go back later, up came the Wesleyan minister. Everybody in the City had heard of the thrashing of Brownie by this time. The rev. gentleman condoled with Hugh on the regret he must be feeling at losing his temper, being a minister of the grace of God.

"I think it was the grace of God that made me do it," said Hugh.

He arrived home in time to assist in bidding Roy farewell. He was riding across country, for he wished to see the battlefields, and afterwards Johannesburg.

The companionship of Roy had been very precious to Hugh. It had seemed to draw him nearer to Margaret. Even as he and Margaret stood side by side watching Roy's figure disappearing on the landscape, Hugh felt that a link had been broken between them. She seemed farther off as Roy vanished. Margaret had seemed more human, less unapproachable, when Roy was about. Hugh had sometimes even begun to dream of a careless, happy intimacy, without the rigid interposition of that self-restraint and discipline which kept them apart. Hugh's laughter-loving benevolent nature was kept strained to a high altitude to win, as he thought, her approval. He was like a boy walking tip-toe through a beautiful room full of delights, where he could feign linger, if he dared.

Hugh dared most things, even the disapproval of the Wesleyan minister, but he did not dare to tell Margaret that he had thrashed Joe Brownie.

Margaret wished Hugh would be jolly and nonsensical with her as he was with Roy. She enjoyed seeing the young men together, and Roy, and his tales of Hugh, had brought quite another side of that young man's character before her—a revelation to which her heart expanded.

That night Hugh had a fit of terrible depression. He sat alone in his little room, missing Roy's company, and trying to throw his soul into the notes he was preparing for his confirmation candidates. Inspiration would not come. Then he remembered that someone had written, "God does not work through a discouraged man." He threw down his pen, because he believed it, and, behold Hugh actually moping! Outside the rain came pattering down, and inside rattled into the bucket in the next room. He shut his eyes, and tried to imagine that Margaret was kind to him, or understood him, and that her sweet womanly presence was near administering comfort. He longed to be able to talk over things with her. For instance, the day's happenings, which had so depressed him. He would have given anything to have had another human being to laugh and chat with him, but inside was the dreary, shabby room, and through the curtainless windows the sheets of drifting rain.

He felt his life was a failure. One of the pet schemes at Ekuseni was to keep friends with the Wesleyan minister, who visited the City. How that good man would have misunderstood him, when he had declared that it was the grace of God within him that had made him get into a passion:

Hugh actually ached for Margaret to understand, and allow him to make love to her.

There was a knock at the door. It was Alexander the Great with a bundle of sticks.

"I am coming to make a fire for you, Inkosi!"

"Oh, yes, make it," said Hugh wearily.

Alexander knelt down by the open fireplace, with his head half-way up the chimney. When he had laid the sticks, and set fire to the paper, he blew a great blast with his mouth, and the patches on his cotton clothes were strained to the utmost extremity. He was grotesque, even Hugh, dull as he was, could not help observing.

"Alexander," he said, "why ever don't you patch your clothes with stuff of the same colour?"

"The girls gave me these bits of stuff," he said, indicating the several patches, " now I must not speak to the girls, I am afraid to breathe, in case bits of me come out of my clothes." Alexander's ludicrous face beamed with mischief.

Hugh smiled in spite of himself.

"You are a ridiculous fellow," he said.

Alexander made a pretence of sweeping up the hearth with a grass hand-brush (made by himself), as an excuse to linger.

"Inkosi!"

"Yebo!" said Hugh.

"Oh, there's such a lovely new girl come to the school. She's fat and plump, and her name is Agnes!"

"Really," commented Hugh.

"I love her very much," Alexander said. "I am sorry for myself because I love her so much."

"Well," said Hugh, "I wish you would find out which girl you really love, and stick to her."

"It's really Agnes," said Alexander. "This time I assure you, it is Agnes."

Hugh smiled at the native's vehemence.

"What's uSijuba been doing to-day?"

"He turned all the wattle bark, and weeded the path to the gate. Then he helped me wash the dishes."

"Dear me!" said Hugh, "you needed help for a couple of plates?"

"Then he went to the school for letters for me, and saw Agnes."

Hugh raised his eyebrows, then he laughed heartily.

"uSijuba's a nice boy, but very ignorant!" Alexander said. He chatted about his different mistresses and masters he had had when he worked in town, describing them in a very ludicrous way, and mimicking their idiosyncrasies. Alexander was irresistible. Hugh forgot he was discouraged, and laughed in spite of himself.

Alexander bustled away to make cocoa, and came in later with a tray and some of his favourite buns.

And so involuntarily, spontaneously, Alexander gave good measure into Hugh's bosom, just when he needed it, in exchange for the kind thoughts and pious care the young man had spent on him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROGRESS OF USIJUBA.

"YOU never told me about Mrs. Richardson before," commented Hugh, who was enjoying Alexander's power of mimicry.

"Yebo, Inkosi! but I spoke of her as Isitata. She lived on the Berea, and went out calling, with white kid gloves, and a green feather in her hat which waggled so." Here Alexander threw out his chest, tossed up his chin, held the grass bush to the back of his head, and set it waggling. The position of the hand supposed to be wearing a white kid glove, and carrying a card case, was such a good caricature of the manner of smart ladies that Hugh laughed immoderately.

"The missus spoke like this, "went on Alexander warming to his subject, "Dick, leta itea, and hurry up, my husband has gone to Johannesburg,,—here Alexander mimicked the kitchen kafir of his mistress in an undertone "fika lapa the best tea spoons and cups, Dick. . . . Oh, how are you Mrs. Brown. Isn't it hot?"

"Bring the cake and scones I cooked this morning, Dick."

The change from the rather forced amiability of the mistress to her guests to the kitchen kafir in which she gave her directions to her servant became so grotesque when reproduced by the unconsciously clever Zulu boy, that Hugh was vastly entertained, and forgot his troubles.

"When did you mistress behave like this?" he asked.

"Always when the Missuses came to see her," Alexander said in his normal tones. "One day every week she made cakes in the morning, and after lunch she put on her nice clothes and sat in the drawing-room. Then she never answered the door herself, or slipped through the window to meet her friends, as she did at other times. I had to be ready in the kitchen, dressed in my clean clothes, and apron. When the bell rang, I had to tell the people where the drawing-room was, when they knew all the time. Some of the

people put on different clothes, and different ways of speaking, as the custom of the abelungu is."

Hugh would not have repressed him for worlds. "To see ourselves as others see us." It had often occurred to the young man that the natives must form strange ideas of the manners and customs of white people, from those with whom they take service. He often heard Alexander in the kitchen entertaining his friends by descriptions of his experiences in Durban. "If it were not," he though, "that the native is naturally a lover of authority as exercised over him by others, and a law-abiding person, amenable to discipline, I feaı the contact with Europeans of a low calibre would be in every case disastrous. Luckily for us he does not so much wonder, as accept without comment, the different phases of civilisation presented to him. If he imitates, it is as a child does, without prejudice against, or a wish to criticise. Yet this involuntary criticism is valuable, and could teach us much. If I could only remember all Alexander's criticisms, commit them to print, and hand them on to posterity! In a generation or so they will have accepted many of the phases of thought of our civilisation, and an unprejudiced outside view will be then impossible. Now is the time, but I am occupied otherwise, and have no leisure for it . . . A native again needs careful handling, or he will shrink into himself, and become impregnable under scrutiny. Somehow even the most frank are elusive and impenetrable. I think it well-nigh impossible for a white man to understand a black. One seems always to come across a 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no further.' I find it even with boys like Alexander."

Hugh thus mused long after Alexander's chattering nonsense had departed kitchenwards.

One day Hugh was writing in "the bower" when he saw a respectable dressed Zulu, in a well-fitting black cloth overcoat, a round brown felt hat, and black putties wound round and round his legs, coming up the path from the road.

His intelligent, good-looking face was overcast and troubled.

He took off his hat, and saluted Hugh respectfully as he approached.

"I have lost my fiancee," he said in his own language. "I have finished the matter of the lobola, but the intombi has run away from home. Her father does not know where she is. They think she has run away to a mission station. The

Magistrate in the district in which I live has given me a letter to you."

Hugh took the letter, and the man sat down respectfully.

The Magistrate wrote a polite note saying that if the girl were hiding at Ekuseni she should be given up at once.

Hugh did not know all the girls at the school, but he said that he would accompany the man, Sembata, to see Miss Murchison, and find out if the girl were in hiding. Personally Hugh did not think so, for the Lady Warden of the school knew the antecedents of every girl there, and no girl was admitted without the parents' or guardian's permission.

Hugh had scarcely been to the school since Roy's departure. Things had settled back to their old constrained feeling between him and Margaret. The glimpses or suggestions of happier relationships made the present conditions unbearable, and Hugh kept as far off as possible. Margaret was suffering in secret, too. She missed the young men's happy laughter, coming up to the terrace in front of the homestead from the wattle plantation. One Saturday afternoon she remembered particularly when Hugh and Roy had been teaching Alexander, uSijuba and the other native boys on the Mission Station to play cricket. They usually made tea on the terrace, and that particular afternoon the young men joined the ladies for tea. Now, she had enjoyed their descriptions of the game, uSijuba, in his huge waistcoat, hitting to boundary each time, after he understood what was required of him, and the grotesque way, as Hugh said, Alexander scampered down the valley after the ball. The funny things that happened in that game, and Hugh's delight in telling, was something to be remembered. Now everything had settled to dreary monotony. In the strict maintenance of discipline and the careful supervision of the girls, and in other cares and responsibilities, there seemed little or no scope for whole-hearted fun. If Margaret had been asked a direct question—whether she thought fun a necessity, a stimulation—she would have replied, of course not, life was too serious.

Yes, life is very serious, but here is Hugh coming up the drive. What does he want?

To Hugh the fact that Sembata had lost his sweetheart, and had come to demand that they should give her up, when they had not the pleasure of the young lady's company, was bordering on the ludicrous; but he chastened himself, so to

speak, to keep such a thought out of the interview, in deference to Margaret. He told the tale in a business-like way, as she came forward to meet him. Margaret's brown eyes looked gravely at Hugh and from him to Sembata.

"This is a serious matter," she said with quiet dignity, as if the honour of the school was at stake.

The bell was rung, and the native girls swarmed into the big schoolroom from all directions. There were graceful, shapely girls, inclined to be tall, and fat, short girls. They wore various kinds of print or muslin frocks, and all were barefooted, as is fitting: In fact, most natives only begin to look inelegant when they wear boots. Here they come, girls of all sorts and kinds of temperaments, in groups of twos or threes, laughing and chatting in an orderly way, entwining arms about each other, very like in many ways to European school girls, and all obedient to the second bell, at which there was dead silence.

Sembata was bidden to enter the schoolroom, while the Lady Warden called the roll.

The girls stood or sat about in groups while the names were read out, and the owners answered "present."

The Lady Warden explained that Sembata had lost his "sister," and he had come to the school to see if she were there.

The man's eagerness when several Lucys answered to their names, and the pained, perplexed look when each Lucy proved to be not his special Lucy, convinced the girls that it was his fiancee who had disappeared. By some such intuition every girl in the school smiled. Margaret opened the school cupboards and the bedroom doors. These bedrooms were devoid of furniture, with the exception of hooks, and a cupboard in which the girls' clothes were kept. Every girl had her own sleeping mat and blanket, which during the day were rolled and folded up in a corner. The windows, which opened inwards, were never closed night or day, and there was a space between the top of the lofty walls and the roof which was weather proof, and yet afforded perfect ventilation. Each open window space was covered with fine wire netting to prevent the entrance of bats or other creatures, and, be it understood, to insure that the girls were safely under the charge of the ladies at the mission, whose sleeping rooms led off from the large central schoolroom also, and whose care it was to padlock the outer doors at night, one

of which led unto the drive, and the other unto the verandah, where classes were also held during the day.

Margaret led Sembata from room to room while fifty pairs of bright eyes watched proceedings. There was a ripple of laughter when Margaret opened the cupboards, and poked amongst the mats. The ladies' rooms were next searched, and then the homestead, which stood somewhat at right angles to the school-house, and contained dining, drawing-room, Miss Harrison's bedroom, and dispensary, two guests' rooms, a European kitchen with stove, dresser and shelves, a large storeroom, the girls' dining-room, kitchen containing an open fireplace, several large kafir pots, and, at the very end of the block, an infirmary or hospital room for the sick. The girls' dining-room contained four large deal tables covered with American cloth, and shelves where spoons and enamel basins for the girls' food were kept. There was also an outside hut where garden and farming implements were kept, a dairy, and stabling and laundry round an angle of the drive.

Every nook and corner Margaret showed Sembata, while the girls were told to stay in the schoolroom, where they laughed, poked fun, and joked to their heart's content.

The three Lucys came in for a share of teasing.

Margaret brought Sembata back to the school, and courteously asked him if he would like to search the wood and the valleys beyond. No, Sembata expressed himself satisfied, and picked up his hat and stick, and departed.

"We even looked under the beds," Margaret said, turning to Hugh.

Hugh did not mean to laugh, but he did. Then he hurriedly went after Sembata to condole with him.

Where are you going now?" asked Hugh.

"To Eshowe," Sembata replied, "and then on and on until I find her, Inkosi."

"This must be a great grief to you," Hugh said with real feeling, "If I can help you in any way, please let me know."

The man's face brightened.

"Thank you, Inkosi, when I come back from Eshowe I will come and tell you."

"Are you a Christian?" said Hugh.

"Yes, Inkosi, and the intombi is also."

Sembata had been working eighteen years at a bookseller's shop in Durban, carrying round parcels. He was a

quiet, steady man with a good character, who worked a year or so, and then went home for six months. He had been wooing Lucy for seven years, and she had been to him the light of his life. The cattle of the lobola had all died of tick fever three years ago. Sembata had worked steadily to get their equivalent in value. He had accomplished this, and had gone home to claim his bride, to find that she had vanished, and her father knew not where.

"I will search until I find her," he said.

The progress of uSijuba was scarcely perceptible. Living in close contact with Europeans of the best sort taught him unconsciously to evolve from the state of semi-savagery in which we found him. Of his own accord he threw away the old waistcoat, and bought himself a neat-fitting khaki suit, of a Norfolk pattern, which suited his trim, graceful figure to perfection. He lived amongst white people, who, although they scolded him from time to time, nay, once even thrashed him, yet he was confident of their goodwill towards him, so that his black face was always ready with smiles. It was for a fit of sulkiness and lying that Hugh had thrashed him. He would never forget the occasion. His own father, Maseba, had thrashed him often; once because he had been found out in telling lies about the goats he was herding. Yes, he often milked the goats, and drank their milk, and when questioned lied honourably about it; but one day another boy saw him doing it, and told his father.

"Did you do it?" asked Maseba.

"No, Baba," uSijuba said.

"Then why did you let Hohoza see you? You are a disgrace to the kraal!"

Hugh's thrashing hurt quite as much as Maseba's, only the Umfundisi did not punish boys when he was in a rage. He waited. When he had sent for uSijuba he was in a secluded part of the wood. He sat on a tree trunk, looking very quiet and grave, and those searching eyes of his looked uSijuba through and through.

"Why did you say to me, and to Alexander, that you locked the stable door when you did not?"

No answer.

"Why have you not answered me for three days?" There was a grieved look in Hugh's steady, blue eyes.

Still no answer.

"Very well," said Hugh, quietly rising. "If you do not

answer me when I come back, I shall thrash you. Meanwhile chop that wood!"

He departed with that long, swinging stride of his through the wattles. uSijuba dreaded him coming back, for he knew he would not answer. He felt he was going to get a thrashing, but he would not have minded so much if the Umfundisi had not looked so grieved. It was the proper thing for boys to be thrashed. He did not care very much for that.

Hugh came back, and folded his arms. "Well?" he said

uSijuba was silent, but dropped the axe and a settled, dogged look came over his face.

Hugh took hold of him, and thrashed him until he blubbered freely, but he never said anything all the time, and he was careful that each blow of his should punish without doing permanent injury.

uSijuba ran away and flung himself face downwards in the grass.

"Don't look at me! You are killing me with your eyes, Inkosi," he shouted in a fine rage. He felt he hated Hugh, and wished he could cast off the spell that the Umfundisi had over him. He was just as any enraged European boy would be under the circumstances. Why do colonists expect that a native child, who is being brought up as a Christian, should show greater virtues and graces, and powers of self-command, than European children who are being brought up as Christians?

"If you scratch a gentleman, you will find a savage!" Yes, you may find even civilised men with thoughts and feelings not a bit higher than Maseba's.

uSijuba, in his rage, even ran out of the wood unto the open hillside, and looked across the successive valleys to Maseba's kraal; but he did not run away.

The amawash had not made the mealies grow. It seemed a very long time ago since the boy had lived over there. It seemed far away. There were the same huts, and the black patch in the bare mealie garden where the fire had been, and all the superstitions and customs which hang about a kraal.

A native boy told me once that the togolosh (a bad fairy) did not live in towns. When questioned as to why the togolosh should not be lingering about the wooded

gardens and shrubberies, he hesitated, and, as natives will, when pressed, he made up an excuse.

"The togolosh is afraid of the lights," he said.

Everybody who knows anything of Zulu superstitions will tell you that the togolosh is a daylight fairy. The superstitious and heathen atmosphere which hangs about a kraal is almost a tangible quality. There are influences, too, which pervade a white man's house, which are felt to be real by the natives. They cannot explain what they mean, but they talk of feeling the darkness, and seeing the light, meaning that light which was never yet on sea or shore. Truly, they are a mystical people, full of strange fancies, and with a language full of figures of speech! Their metaphor may be faulty, and some of their poetic imaginery crude and barbaric, but it is remarkable that in an uncultured, illiterate people there should be these gifts. If pressed for an exposi-tiion of their beliefs, they will lie steadily without shame to cover their real feelings. A Zulu is taught to hide his true self, and, in being asked for explanations, he will always say what he thinks his interrogator expects or would like him to say.

uSijuba was in a dilemma. It was against the natural etiquette to say that he had lost the key of the stable door, and that is why it was unlocked. He knew that Hugh would be vexed with the loss of the key, so he would hide the knowledge which would trouble him.

uSijuba went back to the house at last, and found the Umfundisi sitting on the verandah. It was contrary to the boy's inherited tendency to confess that he had lost the key. He drew nearer, and hesitated.

"What is it?" Hugh asked gravely but kindly.

uSijuba fidgetted.

"Didn't you wish to speak to me?" the young man asked.

"Yebo, Inkosi!" Still he hesitated. "I am sorry you were troubled about me," he said.

"So am I," said Hugh, looking at him steadily. "Why did you leave the stable door open?"

uSijuba threw back his head, and said desperately, "I lost the key!"

Thus he felt he had broken through the code which by pre-natal tendency was strong within him. He was filled with a sense of shame and loss, just as much as a European boy who, having inherited tendencies from his forefathers for

centuries to think a certain custom ignoble, was forced by a stranger of a different race to conform to that custom.

"I am glad you have told me," said Hugh, his whole manner brightening. "Stupid boy! why did you not tell me before? . . Never mind about answering, I am not going to bother you with further questions at present. If you had lost the key and had told me, I should have said, 'Come let us look for it then,' and there would have been no more trouble."

The young man had a wonderfully magnetic personality. The full, rich voice, with its shades and tones of feeling thrown into the euphonious Zulu language, his kindling eye, and beaming manner was a relevation to the Zulu boy. No one had ever in his conscious experience spoken to him like that. He responded with a bright smile, which, as the days, weeks, and months went by, became habitual.

I do not wish to infer that he had not smiled much in his father's kraal, or when working for Jan, but the manner of the Europeans about him "caught on," so to speak, and Hugh's personality by good fortune being especially radiant, the boy expanded unconsciously in all directions, became cleaner in his personal appearance, brighter and more intelligent looking, and proved himself to be very willing and apt to learn all that was taught him.

He took a deep interest in the religious instruction, and was reverent and devout in church; but if you ask me whether he were converted or a Christian, according to Hugh's testimony he was not yet fit for baptism, for an inquirer and learner must show by his life and character that he is making the necessary struggle to serve Christ, and this takes sometimes months, sometimes years. "We guide them, show them, and then it is arranged between their Creator and themselves. It is not our business to force people." So said Hugh. This conveys little to the ordinary lay reader, but there are specialists in every profession, and Hugh was a specialist, so I daresay he knew what he was about.

Meanwhile old Maseba did not languish, but grew fat in prison, for the regular food and work suited his constitution. Often at home in the kraal there were days when the old women and men had to go without food, for stores were often low and the izintombi must be fed to keep them fat and soft, because the wealth and credit of a kraal depended on the prosperous and sleek appearance of the marriageable young women.

One day Hugh came in from Matins and found Alexander, Joseph, uSijuba, and several other native young men and boys in the kitchen, singing to Alexander's strumming of the zither harp. It was a hymn tune from an American collection, and the boys were taking their parts in their naturally apt manner, but the time was "all to pieces," as Hugh said, *sotto voce,* coming up the garden. Hugh paused to listen. They were not singing the right words. They were singing an obscene Zulu refrain to the tune of a hymn! At first he could scarcely believe it. The very boys who had answered so well in class that morning! Little Joseph with that bright uplifted look, and uSijuba whose face grew sober and reverent at the very name of Jesus!

For a moment Hugh felt limp. He appeared at the kitchen door, and the boys looked up and greeted him with a bright smile without a vestige of shame on their faces.

"Tulana, abafana!" (Be quiet, boys.) "I don't want you to sing just now."

CHAPTER IX.

RETROSPECT.

HUGH retired into his study, and sank into the depths of the cane chair he had picked up in Madeira.

For a minute or two he felt the situation was beyond him, and that without doubt it was he or his system had failed, and not the native boys. He felt it to be a climax. He had felt so sure of Alexander and Joseph, even uSijuba had been behaving in a trustworthy way for months. The sun was shining just as brightly, and the birds were twittering in a musical murmur of happiness. Could he read failure from the landscape before him. Surely his scheme for helping these Zulus to a better conception of their manhood, and God's purpose concerning them, was as much a part of the evolution in nature as the rising and setting of the sun, the recurrence of summer and winter. Yet the bestiality of that Zulu song made him writhe with disgust! "Ugh!" he shuddered, "Let's light a pipe and think a way out!"

He had scarcely struck a match when through the open glass door which led unto the verandah he espied Trooper Wilson.

"Hallo!" sang out Hugh, "How's Wilson?"

The N.P. was looking particularly fresh and attractive that morning.

"I am out collecting grievances!" he said, pointing to an official blue paper which stuck out of the breast pocket of his khaki coat.

"I have a grievance!" said Hugh. "You had better come up and let me register it . . . What, you want to go on and see the ladies?"

Wilson dismounted. "It will be the same, I suppose, if I come up to see you. You are put down as one household, you know."

By this time he had shaken hands, and was sinking into a chair on the verandah.

"uSijuba!" called Hugh.

The native boy ran round, and Hugh directed him to lead the horse to grass at a distance out of ear-shot.

"Is that uSijuba?" queried Trooper Wilson. "The boy in a huge waistcoat who used to hang about the postcart stables! I should not have known him. He has improved."

"I hope so," said Hugh, "but sometimes I doubt it!"

The policeman looked perplexed, "But surely you see the difference?"

"Don't you be making a saint of him," Hugh said, pushing his tobacco jar forward. "I hope you like Boer tobacco."

"Thanks," said Wilson, filling his pipe. "But what's the grievance, Mr. Neville?"

"My own stupidity!"

Mr. Wilson laughed.

"Oh," Hugh went on, "I have been sitting here fully half and hour trying to learn the lesson that history repeats itself. Of course I had heard it, but I had never accepted it as a bed-rock principle upon which to found my expectations. Why do I expect the first, second or third generations of native Christians to have as high a conception of morals and manners as we Europeans, after two thousand years of Christian teaching? Because I am an arrant fool, setting myself up as a God, and demanding that certain things shall happen which are totally opposed to the workings of Providence. All the great changes in this world are brought about silently and slowly. God does not work in a hurry, although we would force Him to, by our prayers and expectations, if it were possible. uSijuba's mind is base and obscene, and all natives are the same. How dare I expect that the natural law of nature should be broken, a healthy growth forced to exhibit impossible blooms, to gratify *me?* I forget that it is *God s* business, and that he promotes growth very slowly; in fact, the slower the better and stronger."

The personality of the man behind the sentiments added such weight which it is impossible to describe with pen and ink.

Trooper Wilson looked acquiescent, but was silent, and Hugh went on,

"Take each European country in turn and inquire minutely into the tone of public life and opinion, and we shall observe the atrocities and low moral standard of those who professed and called themselves Christians several hundred years after the countries were

converted. There are even remains of heathen superstitions in our own customs after two thousand years of Christianity. I have been calling to mind how Christian people were burnt as witches, flayed alive, put on the rack, tortured by other pious Christian people in England hundreds of years after beautiful stone cathedrals were built as monuments of Truth in the land. I have been forcing my mind back into Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, and remembering the obscenity of the majority of the populations after they were professedly Christians. It is good to take a large dose of retrospection sometimes. May God forgive me for, being faithless and impatient because the native Christians in Zululand are superstitious and obscene. Nature smiles back at us in our frenzies of impatience, and reminds us that growth goes on steadily und surely and intermittently, and man only is blasphemous enough to complain. "Seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, wind and storm, fulfilling His word."

Trooper Wilson smoked in silence while Hugh told him of the obscene Zulu songs set to hymn tunes.

By and bye they went down to see the ladies.

"I won't register my complaint," Hugh said, smiling, "because the Government might not be able to remedy it, and the ladies may have a greater grievance."

Both men felt rather shy as they walked up the drive. Trooper Wilson was thinking of Barbara Harrison's bright eyes, and how they always flouted him. He wished the Government would send the police round oftener than once a month. He had not the courage to go and call without some excuse. He hoped Barbara Harrison would not be too busy to chat with him.

Hugh, too, was thinking of Margaret.

It was just eleven o'clock, and tea was about to be served in the drawing-room. It was a pretty low room, an irregular shape with the walls and woodwork painted a dainty primrose. The wooden ceiling was enamelled white, and the damask curtains and hangings were wedgewood blue. There were lounge chairs, settees covered in wedgewood blue, with a plurality of cushions, several rosewood and mahogany pieces of furniture, brass and copper jars holding masses of flowers or foliage, an upright grand piano pulled out from the wall, the back of which was draped with a beautiful piece of art needlework, books on shelves all round the open fireplace, and water-coloured drawings and a few good pic-

tures on the walls. Unlike many South African rooms, it was an apartment expressing good taste, and individuality of the owners.

Hugh's sensibilities were soothed whenever he entered that room. His eyes glanced delightedly at the dainty low tea table, with its old-fashioned, well-preserved silver. It was a chilly, damp day, and a fire of logs was burning in the open grate.

"It's very home-like!" Hugh said, "Isn't it?"

Just then Margaret entered. She was looking particularly sweet and gracious. The brown woollen dress suited her creamy skin and reddish-gold hair. The hard knot of hair had become loose, and the soft tendrils, which would escape and soften the contour of face and neck, were having their will.

Barbara Harrison, hiding her cheek against the fur of a large white cat which she carried in her arms, disengaged a dimpled hand, and shot a merry arch look at Trooper Wilson over the cat's head. The other ladies came in, too, and there was an air of homeliness and sociability over the tea cups.

"To think that the Government call us one household!" thought Hugh, "Nothing could be more incorrect!"

Margaret had received a letter from Roy, the contents of which she made general property.

The Murchisons had settled in London, but previously had lived in Edinburgh for about three centuries. Roy's letter was full of the spirit of the metropolis. It was amusing and decidedly original. He had taken his degree, and, instead of being an engineer, he had decided to read for Holy Orders, and become a missionary.

"Hugh Neville is such a splendid fellow, an all-round good sort. He is not cranky, or a bit soft, as somehow one naturally supposes missionaries to be. When I think how he gave up a good West-end living to go and hold up the standard amongst those Zulus, and live in a ramshackle hut, I feel all of a glow. Knowing him has made me to make up my mind. Mother and Eva are sending you out a missionary packing-case, full of clothes. There is a large clock for the schoolroom, curtains and things. I went out to Leyton for the county match. You ought to have been there, Meg! . . . . ."

Hugh coloured up unconsciously at Roy's new worship read out by Margaret with especial emphasis and enjoyment.

He got up, laughing, and bowed his thanks; then, as

the low chair seemed such a long way down for a tall man he remained standing and rested his elbow on the chimney-piece. He allowed himself to take delight in the play of the fire-light on Margaret's bright hair, and the happy light in those brown eyes as anon they were lifted to his. She was so glad that Roy was to be a missionary, and Hugh had done it.

Barbara was having great fun at the other end of the room with Trooper Wilson over the signing of the paper. Miss Laughton was describing how Lydia and Agnes had quarrelled. Agnes, being the elder girl, was justly indignant at being struck by Lydia.

"I am so sorry, said Margaret to Hugh, "because Agnes was such a strong friend for Lydia. Lydia is very handsome and has heaps of admirers. Agnes was just the friend for her."

"Perhaps they will make it up," Hugh suggested. "Zulu girls seldom quarrel."

"I shall send for them both, and try and prevail Lydia to apologise. It will be difficult, for the Zulus are proud."

Hugh enjoyed immensely those eyes uplifted to his face.

"Is there any news from the City, Mr. Wilson?" Margaret asked, when Barbara had duly spread out the blue paper on the davenport and had signed it.

"No," said Wilson, "except that Jim Brownie, from the Colonial Supply Stores, has been requested to leave the neighbourhood. He was invaluable to his master, because he knew Zulu so perfectly. A petition was drawn up by the Norwegian Missionary, and signed by native Christians, and a number of white people, asking the Resident Magistrate to have Jim Brownie removed. He has gone now to a still more remote part of Zululand, and is living at a kraal."

It must not be supposed that Hugh allowed the singing of obscene Zulu songs to hymn tunes to pass without remonstrance. The next time he heard the twang of the zither harp he slipped into the kitchen and had a talk with the assembled natives about low songs and bestiality generally. "Ah!" he thought, "I will set up a standard of righteousness among them. I will try and draw a picture of a Sir Galahad, but not beyond their comprehension." There were two heathen men in skins and beads, visitors, besides uSijuba, Alexander, and Joseph. Hugh stood up in the middle of the squatting natives with his arms folded. A native always squats in the presence of his superiors. Hugh talked to

them quietly, without false shame, reminding them that most Europeans did not understand their language, or they would meet with rough treatment from those who heard such bad, low talking and singing. He told them that in the beginning, before man sinned, God made one woman for one man, and it was only after the devil tempted man to fall from God's ideas concerning him that he took numbers of wives. The Zulus in the past had thought of little else save women, because of such living. It was bad for the Zulu; it made him like, nay even worse than, the dogs and animals. Jesus Christ came to make man as God meant him to be at the first. It was a straining up for the assembled natives to follow Hugh, but for the time they were lifted into a different atmosphere, and thanked Hugh warmly for talking to them.

Sembata returned from Eshowe without having found his fiancee. He came to see Hugh, and had a long talk with him. Six weeks afterwards Sembata came back, a broken-down-looking native. His sprightliness and neat appearance had vanished. Hugh did not know the wild-eyed man in his ragged clothes.

Hugh was seated in his bower, by the wattle trees, and Sembata sat on the ground.

"When I went back to my kraal in the Nkandhla district without Lucy I sat down to mourn," he said. "I have a square house, and from time to time I have bought furniture, so that when Lucy came to me, being a Christian girl, she would be able to live as she has been brought up. Of all the cattle I had only one cow left. I sold this to a white man for £6, but my cow had been sent to graze at the kraal of Fingwayo, because once I gave Fingwayo muti for his sick children, and when I started out to search for Lucy, Fingwayo said he would take care of my cow and feed it until I came back. I was long away, and it happened that Fingwayo had no more good grass at his kraal, and my cow was getting thin, so he sent it by an indoda (married man) to the kraal of Ngubane, whose wife was his sister. When I got back to my home an umfana was waiting to take the cow to the white man who had bought it. I went to Fingwayo to get the cow, then he and I went on to Ngubane, but there I found my cow was dead. I said to Ngubane that he must give me another cow. He said he would not. Fingwayo and I went on our way to a Magistrate to ask him to make Ngubane give me another cow. As we went along a

path we saw some abantu going to a dance. They were dressed up in feathers and skins, and a white man was with them. Although the white man spoke to them in lordly tones, still the Zulu men did not think him high. They treated him as one of themselves. We joined the Zulus, and one of them said the white man was called Wonie, and he had a Zulu girl for a wife, whose name was Lucy. Then I knew it was my Lucy he had stolen, and a fit of rage made me rush to kill the white man, but Fingwayo and Ngubane held me, and took away my sticks. . . . . Maye babo!" Sembata paused, and wiped the back of his hand across his mouth, and rolled his eyes. "Afterwards I saw Lucy—my Lucy—in a hut. I begged her to come to me. She refused. . . . . The white man's name is Jim Brownie. . . . Since then she has wandered away to a big town, and is lost to me. . . . Will you please, inkosi, write to Ngubane, and tell him he must give me another cow, for the white man is troubling me about the cow, and I have not £6 to give him?"

It took Hugh a long time before he grasped Sembata's rambling story. Then he consoled the man as well as he could by advising him to go back to his master and work in town, and he would write to the white man who had bought the cow, and to the Magistrate in whose district he lived.

Margaret was a splendid disciplinarian, and had a genius of management in dealing with the Zulu girls. It was very seldom, as Hugh said, that native girls quarrelled. Lydia's and Agnes' estrangement was quite the exception. The girls were happy, good-tempered creatures, and were brought up to work hard, trained to be diligent and thrifty, and although having a great deal of freedom, under scarcely perceptible supervision, a high standard of living was constantly upheld before them.

> "Their best companions innocence and health,
> And their best riches ignorance of wealth."

Whether at work or recreation, the ladies of the mission knew exactly where each girl was at any time of the day or night.

Ekuseni was happily situated in being in a remote part of Zululand, out of the beaten track, and far from the haunts of undesirable white men, whose influence on struggling Christian girls, who are taught to respect and obey white people, was almost always disastrous. Other mission stations were differently managed, and were often unfortu-

nately situated, so that many sad tales of promising girls—who had broken away from the old order, and, having attached themselves to the new, were like broken reeds and smoking flax—abounded in Zululand.

There are men, a credit to the land and the homes which bore them, who, like knights of old, pass through the land, and by the sturdiness of their character they encourage the broken reeds and flaming flax to grow strong and bright. All honour to them! They are not all parsons; in fact, the majority are traders, policemen, Government officials—just ordinary men, but true knights for all that.

I have even known a man draw rein, when he was in a hurry, too, and keep some native Christian girls in sight, while a white man of bad character was stalking these clean, neat girls, and trying to ingratiate himself into their favour. By a jocular remark, or a sarcastic sally at the man's expense, he would turn the tide of events, and save the girls—yes, even from their own imprudence.

> "A creed is a rod,
>   And a crown is of night;
> But this thing is God,
>   To be man with thy might,
> To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,
> And live out thy life as the light."

Swinburne tells us.

Before I close this chapter I must tell you of Margaret's encounter with the estrangement of Lydia and Agnes.

Both girls were in her room.

"I have been called here to be mocked," said fat Agnes, turning her back on her tall, graceful friend.

Lydia promptly turned her back, and looked defiantly out of the window.

"How can we pray for God's forgiveness," said Margaret, in her gentle voice, "if we do not forgive each other?"

"I am an induna to Lydia, and she has struck me," Agnes murmured.

"Lydia, you must apologise," Margaret said, softly, but firmly.

There was no response. Margaret went on gently pleading, until Lydia's eyes overflowed.

"Say you are sorry," Margaret said.

"I am sorry you said those words, Agnes, which made me strike you," she burst out at last, still with her back to her friend.

At last Margaret succeeded in winning a real apology, and prevailed upon the girls to shake hands. She saw them afterwards wandering about together with linked fingers.

CHAPTER X.

BLOSSOMS.

THREE years had come and gone at Ekuseni, bringing with them little perceptible changes, but inward growth, although the days had passed when Hugh had demanded signs and results, and there was no sign given. Hugh had been down to Durban for a month in July. The complete change and rest, the town life, the hum of civilisation, even the foibles of the people, the kindnesses he met with, the cultured persons he ran up against, the sea air, the saunters on the Ocean Beach, the trips on the switch-back railway, and the chute, besides the other frivolous means of locomotion, sent him back to Ekuseni and work with renewed energy, laughter, and health.

It so happened that he had met an old Carthusian, a former school chum, now aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor. The two young men had done, as they said, the town together.

After Hugh had gone away Margaret had been taken ill, partly a nervous breakdown, and partly the result of a chill. It had not been considered serious enough to recall the other members of the staff who were away holiday making. Barbara Harrison was staying with friends in Eshowe, a picturesque little town, the capital of Zululand. She returned earlier than the others, and found Margaret more or less prostrate, but being faithfully cared for by two or three trustworthy Swazi girls, who, living too far to enable them to walk home (the journey one way taking them about three weeks), were staying at the school.

The other girls had started for their homes in high glee, in groups of twos and threes, with their bundles of clothes and belongings tied on their backs by their shawls.

Lydia had taken Agnes to stay with her home people, because it was impossible to get to Lourenco Marques, where the father of Agnes lived. Lydia's people were nearly all heathen. Some of the people at the kraal could read and write; some wore European clothes. The old father, although exhibiting many Christian characteristics, was not

outwardly a professed believer. He paid for his daughter Lydia to go to school—was anxious that she should bear a good character according to the Christian standard, which, by-the-bye, he did not presume to understand. That Lydia had grown above and beyond him he was willing to allow, and when she came home he liked to hear her read to him, or talk about her religious instruction gained at Ekuseni, Lydia was fond of her home people, and a dutiful daughter, in spite of all her faults. Almost all the brothers and young uncles were away working in Johannesburg. But, in any case, the hand of Agnes was not likely to be asked for by these heathen young men, if they had been available.

The girls settled to the work of the kraal by getting grass for thatching the huts, and thatching them neatly, too. Lydia's mother was dead, but they helped the other women to get water from the spruit, or to gather wood. The girls liked best to collect the grass for the huts. They sang at their work snatches of school songs, sometimes hymns or a verse of a litany, perhaps a chant. Lydia had several plantation songs with a banjo accompaniment which the uncles had picked up in Johannesburg, and which somehow had caught on at the kraal. This they would roll out while away in the fields together, one or other making a vocal banjo accompaniment. Then they would relapse into fits of laughter over some mistake. One day they were walking along a native path at sunset, with the sheaves of grass poised on their heads, when Agnes said:

"I remember the school, and the picture Miss Murchison has in her room of the people in the fields praying."

"I remember, too, Agnes," Lydia said, without looking round. "I can see the picture in my eyes at this moment. Miss Murchison told us about it one Sunday afternoon. She said: 'This good man and woman have a wheelbarrow, a basket, and a fork. They have been working in the fields much as you do. See, the church is far away, and they cannot go to thank God for His goodness to them during the day, but when the bell rings they pray in the field. You may be too far from a church one evening. Perhaps you will remember what these good people did.' "

"I am remembering all the time," Agnes commented.

"Let us pray," Lydia said, simply.

They stood perfectly still, because of the grass on their heads, but with clasped hands and closed eyes. What Lydia said, thus unprompted, was rather beautiful:

"Almighty God, the Father of all men, we thank Thee that Thou has brought us safely to the end of this day. Grant that we may rest this night without sin, and that Thy peace and love may rest on those we love now and always, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Baba Wetu!" (Our Father.)

The Lord's Prayer they both said together, and then, perfectly happy and contented, they went on their way.

The fields were in a hollow, and the path led upwards to the kraal, which was built on a dimple, so to speak, on the side of a high mountain. The land fell away on all sides, but at the back of the circle of huts it rose again to a considerable height to a rocky crag on the sky-line. A path, or, rather, a series of paths, wound round the shoulder of the mountain. A serpentine valley, in which a waterfall tumbled over the rocks and through the bush, the trees of which met overhead in some places with the river rushing beneath, spread out into a fertile plain, which again was shut in by rolling hills, folding one into the other, until lost in the mists of the distance. There were quite a number of native huts within a few minutes' walk, hidden from view by a swell in a hill, or an unexpected dip in the land. It was a country of surprises. One might be walking along a native path in a valley for a considerable distance, and get quite accustomed to the feeling of being low down between gently swelling hills, when a sudden bend or dip in a hill would reveal the fact that one was high up above a mimosa-covered plain. The mimosa country, too, would prove, on a nearer survey, to be no plain at all, but to be broken up and serrated by sweeping pastoral-looking valleys. So, following the narrow way, the native path would lead to another aspect of the pastoral valleys. They would seem to be steep and precipitous, even rocky and bushy. Coming back, the green smiling hillsides would prove to be frowning and craggy with a different light on them. A peep of those purple Nkandhla mountains, between two hills, would reveal them green and smiling in the afternoon sunshine. The faint heliotrope of those heights, which had seemed still farther away in the great beyond, out of ken, would show them not so very far after all, only just over there, and one could see the red mark of the wagon road, or water course, almost distinguish the rocks and the grass against the delicate turquoise blue of the sky in a particular light. It is useless to say to oneself: "To-morrow at this time I will show my friends how near those hills are," for to-morrow the whole effect will have

changed completely, and it may be that only once or twice a year you will get that same blending of colour and distance, perhaps never again. Ah! Zululand, that mystic, beautiful country, so light, and yet in such frowning darkness, so near, and yet so far away beyond our ken and comprehension—can we ever know and appreciate you and your people as we should?

To see the same landscape in a storm, watching the sky coming down to swallow up the hills, as it were, and the earth seeming to rise in the inky clouds, the rain that sweeps along, shutting one into an isolated temple of the storm, with distance obliterated, and only the dry land that has become covered with rushing rivers, and the lightning and crash of thunder for company! Do not think you have been in a country until the spirit of the land rises up and confronts you, until the natural life of the place has entered into your innermost being. To say that you have been there, and this has not happened, is to acknowledge that you have passed through or glided over the land, which should have taken possession of you, but into which you have never been.

As the girls drew near to the kraal, they saw that a fire had been lit outside a hut, as the custom of the people was when they wished to propitiate the ancestral spirits, and beg their help in keeping the terrible storm which was sweeping rapidly across country towards them from doing harm to persons and property. A storm in July was rare, but an exception to this rule proved nearly always severe and disastrous.

There was a murmur of apprehension, and the faces of the people were grave and tense. The girls had to pass close to the fire, but, although they were silent, there was tangible disapproval in their manner. They laid down their burdens, and then went into the hut of the girls. There was a constrained feeling in the kraal, and the bright fire in the darkening atmosphere looked weird and uncanny. It was very close; there seemed not a breath of air anywhere, and the weird chanting of the indoda (married man) who was officiating at the fire added to the grotesque effect.

"I wish they would not do that," Lydia said, apologetically, to her friend. "My father does not know it is wrong."

Agnes was helping to make the fire for the cooking of the girls' supper.

There was a sudden chilly feeling in the air, and a dull swishing at a distance, and suddenly the full force of the

hailstorm was upon them. Hailstones as big as hen's eggs crashed on to the roof of the hut, fell into the spirits' fire with a hissing sound, and put it out, scattered the people into their several huts, breaking through the thatch of some, and causing wildest havoc and confusion. Lydia's father crept into the girls' hut, with his head enveloped in a blanket.

"Pray to the Unkulunkulu for us that the storm may not finish us," he said, breathlessly.

Lydia was very frightened at the storm, she always was at storms; she had grown quite pale beneath her dusky skin, but she turned solemn eyes upon her father, and said, while clasping Agnes' fingers:

"It is not a good matter. The people cry to God when they are in trouble, and He helps them. Afterwards they will not have anything to do with Him. Au! It is not good."

She turned her face away from her father's pleadings, only murmuring, "Ca, Ca."

Agnes squeezed Lydia's fingers. "Do as he says," she whispered.

"Let all the people come," Lydia said, with a proud air. "I am not great that I should pray for them, but let them all do so. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him."

In a few minutes the hut was full of shivering, frightened people, half-hysterical women, and crying babies.

There was dead silence while the father of Lydia spoke, only the swishing and rumbling of the storm outside making an incessant undertone to his words. He was a well-set-up man, with moustache and beard, and sat on a paraffin case while he spoke. The girls and other people were crouching on the ground, so that the floor was almost covered. A few goats had struggled in for shelter, too; most of the others, and nearly all the fowls, were lying dead outside.

Lydia prayed humbly and modestly that the storm might pass away, and do them no further damage. There was a lull in the storm, and her words fell like oil on troubled waters. A voice at the back started, "Baba Wetu," and, strangely enough, almost all the heathen present knew it by heart, and joined in. There was a silence, while all the people remained with faces covered, apparently in prayer.

* The above incident is taken from life, the only exception being that on that particular occasion it was a young man who was asked to pray, and not a girl.

Then a murmur, a cough, and the bleating of a goat, a cackle of a sheltering hen, and with a sigh the people recovered their normal positions.

It was a blissful moment, a hush in time, when ordinary occupations and circumstances were forgotten; the children had been close to their Heavenly Father, and felt a strange feeling of satisfaction and peace. The spell was broken when the old man crept out to look at the weather, and the look of normal conscientiousness swept back into the dusky faces. The storm had passed over into another district, where it was raging fiercely. Just opposite the door of the hut there was a break in the black clouds, and the departing gleams from the setting sun shone right in and lit up the interior.

Lydia and Agnes made haste to see who the young man was who started "Babu Wetu." There are many phases of transition amongst the Zulus of to-day little understood by the majority of white people. Those in the same state are united by strong bonds of affinity. There are the Christians, who are divided by many shades and thoughts of religious teaching. Some are loud-voiced and noisy in their worship; some quiet in their devotions and general demeanour. I shall never forget the servant, a house-man, of a lady in Durban, who objected, she said, on principle, to employing Christian natives. "They are so cheeky and independent. Now, John is a good servant. He has been working off and on for seven years. He never asks to go to church, or talks about being saved," she said.

John had a nice, pleasant manner, a certain look on his face, which, in my mind, was akin to an expression I had noticed on the countenances of natives at an English Church Mission I knew.

He had been performing some little service for me very aptly one pouring wet day, meeting me at the door and taking my dripping cloak and umbrella.

"John," I asked, after thanking him, "are you a Christian?"

He did not like to answer me at first. "Yes," he said at last, "but don't tell the missus."

"I thought so," I said, smiling; "you look like one. Can you read and write? Do you go to church?"

With a great deal of reluctance, he acknowledged that he could and did. "But don't tell the missus, inkosazana."

I promised, and never did.

There are as many sorts of native Christians as there are European Christians; some are touched with civilisation —that is, wear European clothes, can read and write, but do not profess to be amakolwa—some have accepted a little civilisation and Christianity together, and that is all that they in their generation can assimilate; others, again, have made further rapid strides, and have stuck; some live in houses like Europeans, are decently educated, law-abiding, and clean, and one, as we have heard lately, has taken a university degree, and is practising as a lawyer in Pretoria. There are, comparatively, few left, even in remote parts of Zululand, quite as heathen and primitive as a hundred years ago, and where they are not going up they are rapidly going down into the depths.

The young man who had sheltered in the kraal from the storm proved to be uSijuba, no longer a boy, but well-set-up, attractive-looking young man. The girls remembered him at once, and shook hands solemnly.

"Have you finished your work in Durban?" they asked. "Where are you going?"

"I have been house-boy for eighteen months to a missus who did not trouble me, because she went out all day, and left me to take charge of the house and children. The white children have very nice ways, and are quite little people of affairs."

uSijuba was very glad to see the girls from the old school, and Lydia's father greeted him very affably, and requested him to stay some time. This the young man gladly consented to do. Lydia's father felt drawn towards all amakolwa just then, and could not honour the Christian girls enough.

He sent them portions of food from his own hut that evening, and told the younger girls to cook two of the fowls for them. uSijuba was treated like a young man of high family among the Zulus, and entertained in the hut of Lydia's father. It would almost seem that the wearing of trousers and a neat tweed coat was a grace in itself.

Guida, Lydia's father, knew Maseba, and that he was still in prison, but uSijuba was a presentable young man, likely to be prosperous.

The young man told them he was travelling to visit his mother's people, who lived in the Nkandhla mountains. They were Christians. He passed all the other kraals in

the storm, because they were lighting fires to the spirits, until he had sought refuge with Lydia's people.

At this point Guida coughed uncomfortably, and changed the conversation.

"Young man," he said, "will you take some snuff?"

"When I saw there was no fire here I turned in," uSijuba said.

"Our hearts are glad that you chose us. We shall be pleased if you make us a long visit, and it grieves us that the times are bad, but the best that we have is yours," Guida said, with great ceremony.

The girls did not feel quite so comfortable, for they remembered that the fire had only been put out by the storm.

Guida was speaking truthfully when he said the times were bad, for, unfortunately, he had lost all his cattle from East Coast Fever, and there had been bad harvests in succession, and his home people had subsisted for some weeks on stewed arum lily stalks. Now the loss of the goats would add to their poverty; meanwhile, in the happy-go-lucky way that natives have, they fared sumptuously on the goats' flesh, and made amabetyu from the skins. The skins were pegged out to dry near the empty (and weed-covered) cattle kraal. uSijuba helped to increase the revenue of Guida's people by carrying the goat-skins to the distant houses of white people, and offering them for sale. There were no white people living in the immediate neighbourhood, and uSijuba and other natives thought nothing of walking as much as thirty miles in a day, carrying their bundles of skins.

Guida, having so much meat on hand, was determined to have a beer drink. Lydia and Agnes tried to persuade him otherwise, for the girls dreaded the concourse of rough people who gathered together on these occasions, and the coarse ribaldry. Still, it was of no avail; Guida only smiled in a superior way.

"It is right that the people should see my daughters. It may be that the rich young men will want to marry them, and the girls will choose. I may yet be rich and great." He took a pinch of snuff. "When I look at my girls I see the cattle again. See, Lydia, if you should marry, I become rich. . . . But I will not force my daughter, the only child of my favourite wife. You are also the child of the Umfundisi and the Inkosazana. I promised that you should be an amakolwa, and I will not break my word. It is a matter of

many years ago. Your mother, my dear daughter, had several children, who left us when they were little coaxing babies, one after the other. When you came, I said, 'We will have this little girl baptised, and perhaps she will live to give us pleasure.' The Umfundisi said, 'We do not baptise the babies of heathen parents. If one or both of the parents should seek to know the truth, and lead a Christian life, then we will admit the child to holy baptism.' In the end, my dear daughter, your brother became an adherent to these new customs; you did not die; but after a few years your mother went from us, and I took you to the school of the Inkosazana to be brought up."

On the day of the beer drink uSijuba became as wild and frolicsome as the other young men. He oiled his body, dressed himself up in skins, beads, and feathers, and strutted and pranced, making the kraal people and their guests roar with laughter at his sallies.

All the young men paid handsome Lydia attention, and uSijuba determined to outshine them all.

"Choose me," he said, with flashing eyes. "Are you not as beautiful to me as the roses, and the very hills happy to overshadow your home?"

"I do not know," Lydia said. "You are leaving off the customs of the amakolwa, and if I choose you I am afraid you will trouble me. I will love in the manner of the white people."

"That is my wish, too," he said, solemnly, "only to-day I will make merry and sport."

"Yes," she said, only half allowing her warm regard to be seen, "to-day you will be bad and to-morrow good. I want you to be good always."

"Ah! my dear one, do you not want me to be happy?"

"Yes," she said, smiling and unbending; "happy and good always."

Lydia clasped the hand of Agnes, and the girls, with arms entwined, went into the hut to talk things over.

Outside in the open space by the cattle kraal the assembled company drank native beer and made merry.

Lydia had pretty dimples when she smiled. Agnes heartily approved of uSijuba, and Lydia said, with twinkling eyes:

"Oh! Agnes, my heart wants me to go and sit with the people, and some part of me wants to stay here."

In the end they put on clean, pretty muslin frocks and bright ribbons, and went to join the company.

There was a loud acclamation of approval from the young men, and warm invitations from the women and girls.

There was laughter, singing, dancing, and eating and drinking to excess. uSijuba had a concertina, which he played to accompany the native songs.

In the late afternoon the girls, Lydia and Agnes, slipped into their hut, and after a while the raw native women retired also. The men, whose blood was up, gave vent to their excessive animal spirits by dancing and playing with sticks. Louder and fiercer grew the voices, and wilder and more obscene the songs. Agnes and Lydia huddled together, and hoped nothing dreadful would happen. Suddenly worked up as the men were by good feeding and beer, the playing with sticks turned to a faction fight, and blood was spilled. The murmur of fierce voices, the gasping, panting, and crashing and banging of the sticks frightened the girls terribly. They crept out of the kraal, and ran up the slopes of the moutain behind, and in the shelter of a huge rock they watched proceedings, thoroughly frightened, and yet equally fascinated. The moon, like a huge sentinel, hung in the sky, shedding its brightness over the grotesque scene. Now and again a couple of stalwart fellows sprang out into the patch of moonlight, struggling and prancing. The girls could see the rolling of their eyes, and hear their murmurs and gasping. Here and there amongst the shadows a man fell with a broken head or arm. The frightened women dragged the wounded out of danger.

The fight was still proceeding hotly and strongly, when round the bend of the mountain on the series of native paths came the police at a smart trot.

The girls watched the police parting forcibly the several couples, and with difficulty restoring peace and order. The matter ended by the whole party, except the injured, being marched along in groups under police supervision to the nearest Magistracy.

The girls crept back to the kraal, and after the women had condoled with each other for their fright, and had done what they could for the injured, they crept to their several huts to sleep.

They were all sound asleep next morning when the district surgeon rode out to stitch up broken heads and mend limbs.

"Who has been attending to these men?" the doctor asked.

Agnes stepped reluctantly forward.

"Who taught you to dress wounds?"

"The ladies at the mission station," the girls told him. "We go with Miss Harrison, who is a nurse, carry the muti and bandages, and help to dress the wounds, or attend to the sick people, in the kraals around."

"You have done very well," the doctor said; "now you can help me."

The men who were at the faction fight were fined a pound apiece, which was promptly paid in the Court. uSijuba was fined ten shillings, because he was the youngest engaged. When he came back to the kraal the girls teased him.

"You were only fined ten shillings because you did not hit hard enough for a pound," they said. Lydia and Agnes both joined in the laugh at his expense. uSijuba determined to look well in the eyes of Lydia.

He started off at once to the Court, and asked the Magistrate to accept another ten shillings.

"I cannot," the Resident Magistrate said. "The indaba is finished."

"I hit as hard as the, biggest indoda." uSijuba said proudly. "The girls laugh, and say I only hit like a boy."

CHAPTER XI.

GOOD MEASURE.

MARGARET lay on a deck chair. She was feeling tired, and, contented, rested in spite of her enforced idleness. There was a restful expression in her dark eyes, and an elusive, almost bewitching, dimple in her cheek when she smiled. There was not another white woman for miles around at that time, although Barbara Harrison was on her way from Eshowe. Alone and ailing, in a strange land among strange people, yet she was not unhappy. The atmosphere was redolent with blessedness; the graceful, thoughtful kindnesses of the Swazi girls, the neat, clean ways she had taught them, were given back now in good measure, full and brimming over, just when she needed it.

"The Umfundisi is riding along the wagon road on the distant hillside," Helen said, as she brought a dainty tray with beef tea and toast. Ujesi, another slim bare-footed Swazi girl, was arranging flowers in a huge copper bowl which stood on a table at Margaret's elbow.

"Inkosazana," ventured Ujesi, "the Umfundisi will be here in a few minutes. Shall I run and put the kettle on?"

"Yes, please do," smiled Margaret; "and if you see Blanche, tell her I want her. She did my hair so nicely the other day. If the Umfundisi comes I must put my hair up in the proper way." Her slim fingers touched suggestively the long coil of bright brown hair, which came over one shoulder and lay in a wealth of waves and tendrils on the turquoise blue gown.

"If you please, Inkosazana," said Helen, "your hair is so beautiful, please do not pull it away at the back where no one can see it."

Margaret dimpled and blushed in spite of herself at the honest admiration in the black girl's eyes. "I cannot pull it away myself," she said quietly, smiling; "my arms are so tired, and the hair is so heavy. Blanche must do it for me."

Ujesi came back in a minute, saying Blanche could not be found, but that some natives were waiting on the drive for permission to come and offer their condolences to the Inkosazana.

"Who is it?" Margaret asked.

"Two of Maseba's men, and Linda."

"Linda!" said Margaret, in surprise. Has he come thirty miles to ask after my health? Bring them, Ujesi."

It was a pretty woodland glade in which Margaret spent that time of convalescence, with a vista between the trees of a distant mountain range, and pleasant smiling valleys and swelling hills intervening. Overhead the evergreen boughs of wattles and gums laced and intertwined, forming a pleasant screen from the blazing sunshine. Underfoot the tufts of grass were kept cut short, and mats, made of dried grass, by native girls, were spread about. It was there that Margaret dozed and dreamed her way back to health, while the musical twittering of birds and the cooing of doves lulled her sensibilities to rest.

The girls did the cooking and housework unaided and without supervision. They even did the washing, and prepared the rooms for the returning ladies, finding time between whiles to weed the beds and paths close to the house, although the drive and the rest of the grounds had to go unattended. When Margaret was taken ill, the five girls who had remained at school had a consultation, appointed an induna, and laid their plans of action. The great aim was to prevent the Inkosazana from being worried. One of them wrote, at the others' request, and told Miss Harrison, at Eshowe, but Margaret, when she heard, told them to write again, and say she was not really ill, only tired, and that the girls were very good, and she would take a rest cure. On no account was Barbara Harrison to spoil her holiday. The girls waited on Margaret during the fortnight she was in bed, and when she was better helped her to dress, and assisted her into the wood, where she read perhaps a verse of poetry, dreamed about it, picked up a bit of work, dropped it when she was tired, and so drifted back to health.

When the doctor's wife in "The City" heard about this illness she mounted her horse and rushed out in a great state of mind at "poor Miss Murchison being ill, and at the mercy of those dreadful native girls."

Margaret, surrounded by tokens of love and care, smiled a wan smile at the talkative dictatorial lady, and glanced at the flowers the girls had brought and arranged for her, and in her breast longed to be left in peace, at the mercy of "those dreadful black girls."

The doctor's wife did not come again. She had a large

family of children to attend to, and, really, as she told the people on the tennis court, "Miss Murchison does not seem ill, only tired. Yet I often wonder how those missionaries pass their time; they must be terribly dull."

Linda and Maseba's men came to offer condolence.

They squatted on the mats, and expressed in flowing figurative language their regret.

"Do we not remember, all the time, Baba, that you love our people, the Zulus, have left your father, mother, and home in the King's kraal in London, and have come to bring us the Light? Is it not the best gift the white people could bring us? Now the princess of the land is sick, we mourn all the time. Maye babo!"

Maseba's men, being heathen, expressed their regret in different terms, but with none the less picturesque effect.

We cannot snuff," they said, "until she who loves the people rises up in power and beauty again."

While they were speaking three other groups of natives appeared who had travelled from various distances, all on the same errand. The girls marshalled them to Margaret's presence with much appreciation of the honour done to their Inkosazana. She was being treated like some great Royal person, and as the greetings, effusive and extravagant as they were, came unexpectedly and spontaneously, the girls felt it to be an honour to be in attendance on Margaret.

"Ah! lady," one old man said, his face wreathed in smiles, "blessed are the hills that smile on you, and the trees that are arched over you."

Margaret had been receiving these visits off and on for days.

When she was quite alone in the wood she thought of all the blessings that had come into her life since she had come out to minister to these people. A grateful tear stole from under the dark fringed lids and rolled down her cheek.

"Did not my life seem useless and empty? Was not I cramped and effete with luxury, good living, and cultured surroundings? Again and again I tried to find my sphere, and failed. I had travelled, I had read the best, I had indulged in wild gaiety, I had seen everything there was to be seen I concluded. How elusive and wonderful life is here. I have found my satisfaction in giving. I have found a purpose and use for the best that is in me. Now life is complete . . . . well, nearly."

So thinking she fell asleep.

She moved restlessly, and opened her eyes, to find Hugh's ardent, sympathetic gaze upon her.

He was slightly disconcerted when she awakened.

She disengaged her fingers from the tendrils of hair, and held out her hand with a smile.

"It is good of you to run over so soon," she said. "The girls saw you coming, but we did not expect you yet."

"Hector and I were so glad to be home," he said, lingering on the word. "We galloped. Blanche was in my cottage; she had tidied up, opened the windows, made the bed, and even put flowers on the table. It is wonderful how some of these native girls can think of things."

"I dine here at mid-day, in the wood. Of course, you will join me until Alexander returns."

The smile, the dimple, and unexpected graciousness almost intoxicated him.

"Have you had a good time?" she asked.

"Yes," and his ruddy face beamed and then softened. "You have been ill. . . . . You should have let me know. I am so sorry."

"Tell me about Durban," she said.

He did so, and then they talked of the new church which was being built, because the congregation had outgrown the old.

There was a sound of a native driving cattle, the peculiar cry, which it is impossible to spell.

"It is nice to hear that," said Margaret. "One misses the cattle so much. I shall be glad when East Coast Fever is quite obliterated."

The induna of a heathen chief who lived miles away had brought a present of a salted ox towards the Church Building Fund. It was a beautiful beast, worth about fifteen pounds.

"The people of Cwezi are waiting to be taught, and the Inkosi says will you please send someone," the induna explained at length .

"Here are the heathen rising up to contribute towards the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Why will the Colonists deprive themselves of good measure? Alas!" Hugh said.

CHAPTER XII.

DARKNESS.

MARGARET and Hugh had lunch together in the wood. Hugh went off to look at the ox, and told Margaret he would get the natives to drive it into the paddock by way of the terrace, and by just turning her head she could see it. There was quite an excitement about that ox. The natives who had come to condole with Margaret thrashed the matter out with the induna. A chief whom they all knew and respected had sent this beautiful black and white beast as an offering to the Great, Great One, whom the Christians called "Our Father." The men put down their shields and sticks, sat on the lawn, and talked and snuffed. The chief and his people wanted to believe. The induna, a quiet, elderly man, told them the whole story. Two of the chief's men had gone to work in Johannesburg, and had there attended a mission. They did not stay long enough to be baptised, but when they went home to a distant part of Zululand, far out of reach of bad white men's influence, they taught their friends and relations what had been given to them. The consequence was a great longing to know more. It so happened that Hugh, who had been visiting a distant out-station, met some of the chief's men, and held a service for them, for which they were touchingly grateful. He explained that he considered it dangerous, as he said, "to scratch the surface." They must go on being built up daily and hourly in the Christian life. At present they could not send them a teacher, but directly he could he would. He also told them about the girls' school, and the work carried on there, and the large new church they were hoping to build. That was some months past.

Hugh had met uSijuba in Durban. He was in charge of some little children on the Beach.

"He was so glad to see me," Hugh said, "and they were nice little children, his charges, a little girl and two small

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* The present of the ox and the whole of the above are facts, scarcely altered at all to suit the purposes of the story.

boys. uSijuba seemed to have almost entire charge. He told me he washed and dressed them, told them stories, and amused them the whole day."

"I felt sorry for that," Hugh continued. "It has puzzled me ever since I arrived in South Africa."

"What?" said Margaret.

"The way mothers leave their children to be spoilt by always being with black boys and men."

Margaret was indignant at the idea. "They cannot understand what they are doing," she said.

"I am fond of kiddies," said Hugh. "It seems a pity. A couple of little rosy-cheeked boys in jerseys and short, tight trousers, and a nice little girl, all curls and dimples and lace, Quite small children, you know. I don't know how old they would be. I am not good at that sort of thing."

Margaret smiled in a superior way.

"It is a pity uSijuba's uncles would not allow him to continue working for me, as he wished. He was showing great promise when the uncles insisted on his going to work in Durban to get more money. He was almost ready for baptism, and his character would have been established and settled if he had remained on here. They said he could read and write, and had grown a big boy, and must bring money home to the kraal. uSijuba told me he was going home for several months to visit his mother's people at Nkandhla."

The girls came to say that Miss Harrison was coming along the road. She was riding, and five of the girls were with her, carrying parcels on their heads.

"Oh! the girls! I have such happiness," said Helen, clapping her hands. There was a great shout of joy from the others, and they craved permission to go along the road to meet the travellers. Margaret gave permission, and then said, turning to Hugh as they scampered off:

"They have been such good girls, working all their holidays with never a complaint. I had arranged in my mind to let them have picnics, and other treats, but I was taken ill."

The girls met their friends, greeted Miss Harrison courteously, and solemnly shook hands with the girls.

"Alexander asked you to buy him a present for his lady love. What have you bought," Margaret asked.

"Oh!" said Hugh, "it was difficult. I thought the fat and comely Agnes would like a shawl. I went into a shop—a big shop—I forget the name—and asked for a shawl for a girl. I dodged a man who wanted to inquire into my busi-

ness. I think it impertinent of those men in ladies' shops who stop one and interfere. He seemed to think I wanted a shawl for a white girl."

"Your sweetheart, perhaps," said Margaret, archly.

A shy, happy look swept over his face, and he tried to meet her eyes and hold them with his own, but she was deliberately picking out the lace on the wide sleeves of the dainty gown, and said nothing.

"However," he went on, with a half sigh, "a man behind a counter showed me heaps of soft, lacy, and fluffy things. I tried to describe what I wanted, then he said it was a rug, and told another man to conduct me to the furnishing department. They showed me hearth rugs and skin rugs. I assured them it was a thing with a fringe. Then they showed me squares and stripes of carpet with a fringe.

"It is a shawl for a black lady I want," I told them in desperation.

Both men glared at me as if they had received an electric shock.

"A kafir!" they exclaimed in alarm.

"Precisely," I said, with dignity; "a shawl for a native girl."

"I got something at last, but it looks remarkably like a tablecloth."

"Perhaps it is," said Margaret, laughing softly.

"May I ask one of the girls to get the parcel from my saddle?" Hugh asked.

It was brought, and he untied the string, and allowed the contents to display its magnificence. It was a gorgeous maroon, with big amber flowers, and a heavy fringe.

"It is a tablecloth," said Margaret, with twinkling eyes. "But I am sure Agnes will like it immensely."

She was looking quite scintillating and joyous when Hugh left, somewhat abruptly, shortly after.

All the way down the drive, and up to his cottage on the edge of the wood, Hugh went in a tumult of happiness.

"Dare I?" he said, *sotto voce*. "Can it be possible?" He wanted to be alone to think, so he fidgetted about with the pretence of putting away his things, but only made a greater confusion, in opening drawers and cupboards, and tumbling the contents out on the floor. The chaos did not seem to worry him, however, for he left off from time to time, for instance, in the middle of putting away his collars,

and sat on the window-ledge whistling a tune the band had played in Durban.

Alexander came in, and greeted him delightedly. Strangely enough, Hugh forgot to give him the tablecloth for Agnes. Then, again, when the native brought in tea, Hugh forgot to pour it out, and let it get stone cold.

The joyousness which possessed him expended itself after a time. He sank into the Madeira chair, tired physically and mentally. He leaned forward, and rested his face in his hands.

"What! Could I bring her *here*? Could I be selfish enough to take her from the daintiness of the school homestead, and ask her to share this tumble-down shanty with me?"

An awful fit of desolation swept over him. Down he went into the depths—poor Hugh. When Alexander came in to light the lamps, he growled him away, and fought his battle out alone.

"I must have her!" he panted passionately one moment, and the next, "Dare I fly in the face of Providence when such happiness is denied me? Can I apply for a larger grant to enable me to build a house when all available funds are swallowed up by the new church? Did not a native chief, even to-day, ask for a teacher to be sent to him and his people, and we cannot because we have not the funds? Oh! the callousness and selfishness of the South African Colonist! Surely the selfishness of the fathers is visited on the children, and the rising generation is losing its hold on religion, because the parents did not give out to others the blessings they themselves received. 'He that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.' . . . Yet, who am I that I should criticise others when 'I will,' 'I shall,' 'I must,' have taken such hold upon me? Let me cast out my own demons, and learn to submit to His will, before I condemn others."

The struggle went on all night, and at daybreak Alexander found his master fast asleep in the Madeira chair, utterly worn out.

Margaret sent up a dainty little note, inviting Hugh to lunch in the wood with herself and Barbara Harrison. Hugh took that note to his room, and gloated over it with delight. He even kissed it in a boyish way, and then put it inside his note-book. He wrote, rather stiffly, however, to say he was very tired from his journey, and too busy to come.

Margaret was offended, but she said nothing to Barbara Harrison; only a bright red spot burned in either cheek, and a steely look came into her eyes. The girls thought that the Inkosazana was sweeter when she was ill.

Meanwhile events at Guida's kraal were happening rather quickly. After the beer drink Guida's people were plunged into despondency. It seemed that only the girls Agnes and Lydia were normally good tempered. The truth was that the people's livers were upset by the surfeit of meat and drink.

Not one of the men cared for the fine of a pound, except that it materially decreased their ready cash, and that several of them would have to go to Johannesburg or other large towns to work for the white people. It so happens that natives will often set aside the money for the fine as part of the general expenses of the beer drink and consequent faction fight. They will work for white men to have enough money to make such indulgences possible.

Guida and his people were hard up.

The second day after the beer drink Pongola, the witch doctor, came to the kraal. Agnes and Lydia had gone ten miles to sell some eggs to people at a Dutch farmhouse, so they did not see him.

Guida had a troublesome cough, and was feeling ill. Like most natives, he thought he was a great deal worse than he really was. He sat snuffing with Pongola, telling him how ill he was, and that last night an umkovu (ghost) had troubled him.

Pongola played up to the old man's fears. He looked under his fringe of matted hair, and saw the clothes of some amakolwa girls drying on the bushes in the valley below the house. He was gifted with quick intuition, and knew native human nature very well. Again, he had power—whether hypnotic, mesmeric, or diabolical, I am not prepared to say. Guida, other natives, and even white people, have told me, *entre nous,* that they have felt uncomfortable in his presence.

He had small eyes, without any gleam in them, bladders of muti and bones strung about his person. He had the feathers and cat's-tails that only witch-doctors wear, and, to say the least, his face was cunning and evil. Still, he had power, and the Zulu's instinct is to show power the greater deference.

The memory of the sudden cessation of the storm, when

the kraal people prayed to "Our Father," still had its effect on Guida.

"I will not ask you to stay," said he; "only if you can tell me quickly how to recover my riches and greatness I will repay you."

In his heart he was afraid the girls would come back and condemn him by their looks for the presence of Pongola.

"I need the blood of a young ewe goat to make the muti to do this thing that you ask," Pongola said, in a pompous, mysterious manner.

Guida groaned aloud. Another of his goats! They would soon be all gone; yet, if Pongola could make him rich, it was a good investment. The goat was driven outside the kraal, and an umfana, who was half-witted, and who assisted Pongola in his magic, slaughtered the goat, and helped to make the muti. A little blood was taken from the goat while it was alive, but the rest of the animal—flesh and skin—was confiscated for Pongola's own use.

Water was poured over some roots which had been placed in a cooking-pot, and when the mixture had been worked up into a frothy state the poor goat, about to be killed, had been smeared with this concoction.

Pongola assured Guida and his headmen that the ancestral spirit had departed. He suggested that Zincane (Lydia's heathen name) should be given in marriage to Maseba, who was a great man, and would give fifteen head of cattle, or their equivalent, for her lobola. He was sorry that she had become an ikolwa, but as she was a good girl, and fond of her father, he could persuade her to do this. Maseba would soon be out of prison. Pongola knew that he loved Zincane, and that his sons and younger brothers had been working for him, so that there were still cattle at his kraal, and flocks of goats.

Guida said that he was arranging that his daughter should marry a rich and great man, and when questioned as to his name and tribe he made evasive answers, and there the matter ended.

uSijuba had some goats at the kraal of his mother's people. He had been to see them, and to visit a remote store to buy Lydia a present. On his way back he saw the girls coming over the brow of a hill.

uSijuba was rolling out a more or less indelicate love song, and waving his sticks, as he travelled at a swinging trot.

When he saw the girls he shouted out many amorous sallies, or, rather, to be more correct, he did not shout, but spoke in a clear chanting tone which carried.

The girls spoke back to him, and gradually the distance lessened.

When he met them he presented Lydia with a huge metal brooch, in the form of a medallion, containing a picture of King Edward and Queen Alexandra.

"We are the people of King Edward, and we live in one of his cattle-feeding kraals, my dear loved one," he said.

"Au!" said both girls, in a breath of admiration.

"You have been to the town, and know so much," Lydia murmured. "Who is this lady?"

There was nothing uSijuba liked so much as to show off his superior knowledge to country girls. He had awed them very much previously by telling them of carriages without horses, and the sea and ships. In spite of the ten shillings' fine, he felt he was getting his own back in this way.

"It is the wife of the Inkosi enkulu, King Edward, who is chief over Zululand now."

The girls had heard this before, but it was all very hazy to them. uSijuba pressed his advantage.

"King Edward cannot come to Zululand; he is too busy."

"Too busy?" said the girls in a breath. "Does he work?"

"Work! No!" uSijuba laughed. He did not quite understand it himself, but he waved it aside.

"White chiefs do not lie down and sleep all day, like black chiefs. They are busy writing letters."

"Oh! how clever he must be," said Agnes.

"He is very great, and has cattle-feeding kraals all over the world."

"How do the people go to these kraals?"

"They go in ships, which are the King's bearers (abatwali), taking food and clothes to the King's people across the sea."

The girls were silent, thinking. After a time, Lydia said:

"How can the ships see the paths at the bottom of the sea?"

Amakolwa girls were really very curious. He did not understand it himself.

"Oh!" the young man said, loftily, "they have machines to show them the way."

The only machine the girls had seen was a sewing machine.

"How can the machines show the paths at the bottom of the sea?"

uSijuba did not know, but he was not to be defeated. He took a pinch of snuff with a grand air.

"It is a matter for men, not for girls," he said.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CONSPIRACY.

As uSijuba and the girls came back to the kraal they felt that something had happened.

Very soon they were told of Pongola's visit and the divination.

uSijuba was both angry and awed. He wênt to Guida, and begged the old man to tell him the name of the man who was to marry Lydia.

"Did you find your goats had increased as you wished, young man?" Guida said.

"Yes, Baba," uSijuba replied. "I have now more than fifty."

A native thinks it unlucky to count goats, cattle, houses, or people. He knows his animals by the peculiarities of their hides, but he does not like to know the exact number. He says something will happen to them if he does. There are white people I have met who are superstitious in the same way, but, certainly, not as clever as the Zulus in detecting their own cattle or goats amongst hundreds of others.

"Yes," a Zulu will say, "my cow was black like that, with white legs. The only difference is mine had a white spot on its left ear."

Guida chatted about goats and cattle until uSijuba could have screamed with impatience.

"Stay quietly," my son," the old man said. "Now, I have never worked for white people, but you, I see, have learnt some of their quick ways of speaking and moving." Guida talked of anything and everything except Lydia's prospective husband, and it was not etiquette to interrupt the indoda.

After wandering round and round, and arriving at nothing, in the way the Zulus have, uSijuba was allowed to say that he intended to go to Johannesburg, get a big wage, and become rich and great, because he loved Lydia.

Guida asked him how long he was going to be in Johannesburg.

"Until I remember my home and Lydia too much, and my bones ache with longing," said uSijuba.

He could not get Guida to allow them to become formally engaged, or to mention the name of Lydia's prospective husband. All he would say was, "Come and greet me when you return."

Guida was as elusive and secretive as, sometimes it seems, only the Zulus know how to be.

uSijuba departed the next day. He took a touching farewell of the girls, especially Lydia, before her father, but Guida coughed and pretended not to see.

"Show me that you love me before I go, that my heart may long for you all the time," uSijuba said.

"You said you would not trouble me, but here is my word and my token." She gave him a present of a long string of beads of different colours, threaded so as to mean: "I love you; you are always in my heart. Do not forget me."

They then solemnly shook hands, and uSijuba went on his way. He was going to walk fifty miles to Dundee. Up and up he went, over the shoulder of the mountain, a fine specimen of a modern young Zulu, tall, lissome, well-developed, with a fine idea of his own importance. He had some education, some knowledge and belief in God, and ideas and powers half-developed or struggling through the maze of heathen superstition and baseness. He was a type of thousands of half-cultured natives in the state of transition that abounds to-day, generally law-abiding, with a due respect for his betters, but moulded after the pattern of the particular sort of white people with whom he is surrounded.

As uSijuba stepped out towards Johannesburg, singing as he went, he was not a bad product of the missionaries' teaching and modern civilisation. There he goes, and for the time we bid him farewell.

Next day the girls started on their way to Ekuseni. Guida had been strange in his manner ever since the beer drink and Pongola's visit of divination. He gave Lydia five shillings for her school fees, and five shillings for what clothes she needed.

Lydia was surprised. It seemed untold riches, especially as the times were so bad. Lydia's heart was full to overflowing. A few quiet tears rose to the surface and overflowed.

"Oh! my baba," she said, "I will remember you all the time, and pray for you always."

"Go in peace, my daughter," said the old man. "the only child of that sweet and wonderful woman, my dead wife. Listen to the teaching of the Inkosazana, but do not forget your people. Pray to the Great, Great One for me, that I may have peace."

Lydia turned back at the first knoll, and said, in that peculiar "carrying" voice: "Stay in peace, oh, my father; I remember you always."

Guida watched the girls until they disappeared round the bend of the road. He stood with his arms folded, muttering to himself, then he turned to the women, and said:

"There goes all my oxen. Maye babo!"

For days Guida was unapproachable. He confessed to the izinduna that he did not want Lydia to go at all, but that some power outside himself had prevented him from keeping her.

As the girls went along, on the second day's journey, they saw a man, dressed in feathers and skins with all the paraphernalia of a witch-doctor, bending over the ground. It was at the spot where the native paths crossed the white man's wagon road. A white man on horseback was coming along the wagon road. He drew rein when he saw the witch-doctor at his magic, finally dismounted, and threw the reins on his arm. The girls and the white man arrived at the spot almost at the same instant.

Pongola, for it was he, went on rattling his bones on the ground and muttering, as if no one were near. He had timed himself to meet the girls on their return journey, and was determined to impress them with his magic.

The girls would have passed on, with inward tremour, but without comment, when the white man stopped.

"What is he doing?" he asked.

"I do not know," the girls said in a breath, really meaning, and implying by their manner, "I do not wish to tell you." Often the best-disposed Zulus are secretive when white people are curious about their customs.

The young man turned to Pongola.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"I am finding out," Pongola said.

"What are you finding out?"

"I am finding out what has happened to the ladies, the teachers at Ekuseni, that they have not returned to the school."

"Who has not come back, and what has happened?" the girls asked, in a breath.

Pongola, still, apparently, labouring under a great exertion, went on with his magic, with a fierce, set look on his face. "I see," he said, in a far-away voice, "a wagon crossing a river. There is no boy to lead the front oxen, and the leaders are carried down the stream. There are two ladies in the wagon, the teachers at the school. They are very frightened, and cry out. I see another wagon, drawn by donkeys, which has gone on ahead. I see the people turn back, and help the wagon in distress. All is well; the wagon is late, but will arrive at Ekuseni to-morrow."

The girls were very much afraid at such an exhibition of magic. They hurried along the road, muttering, and trying to shake off the horrid feeling which had come over them at Pongola's mysterious words.

The young white man asked Pongola how he knew that what he said was really happening.

"I felt a cold shiver pass up and down my back when I rattled the bones, and then I saw the picture of the wagons."

"I long to be at Ekuseni. The evil spirits do not come where white people live," Agnes said, as the girls hurried on.

"The devils are afraid to come to the school. It is a holy place. Oh! Agnes, let us run!"

They started at an even pace, and were joined by other school girls at the spot where the paths crossed. There was a shout of delight, and the girls sprang to greet each other, then solemnly shook hands. Afterwards their tongues were loosed, and they talked and talked, as girls of all nations seem able to do very well on such occasions.

Agnes and Lydia told the other girls of the divination of Pongola, and what he had disclosed.

"Maye babo! The poor amakosazana! Perhaps the wagon upset. Pongola is a clever witch-doctor, and knows so much."

It is the custom of the school girls to arrive at sunset, but the girls were so anxious as to the safety of the ladies of the mission that they arrived just as afternoon tea was being served in the drawing-room.

The girls, with tired, dusty feet, and with bundles on their backs, gathered in a group at the verandah door.

They could hear Barbara Harrison's laugh, and Miss Murchison's voice. The other two ladies were describing

how they had escaped from a bad accident, almost word for word in the manner of Pongola's recital. The ladies were too interested for a moment to notice the girls. When they did they welcomed them gladly, and inquired about their journey, and then sent them off to get food and rest.

It was only afterwards that Margaret heard of Pongola's divination, and then it was almost by accident. There are strange things happening in Zululand every day, I suppose, but white people seldom know about them, nor could they explain them if they did. Superstition, witchcraft, faith-healing (or its alternative, when a native will die, because he believes he is ill or has been "takated" by others), mental telepathy, even a peculiar system of wireless telegraphy, when a native will send a message from hill to hill—all these things, and much else that is mysterious and elusive, are obvious but inexplicable.

"Pongola is possessed with evil spirits," the girls said, and Margaret let the matter drop. Certainly, Pongola was a wicked man, although an extremely clever one. The native boy who accompanied him was called, by the natives, "Beetles," because they said he had beetles in his head which made him silly.

Hugh laughed when he heard this.

"Yes," he said, "I always knew he was half-baked; and it won't exactly improve his intelligence being an apprentice to Pongola and his calling."

"Inkosi," asked Alexander, who was his informant, "are beetles in the head the demons mentioned in the Bible?"

"Ask me another," said Hugh. "If I said they were, you would assure me solemnly that you had seen the beetles coming out of the boy's ears and nose! I know you natives too well. Be content to know there are certain things we cannot understand, and make use of what really is clear to you."

Pongola gathered up his bones and muti, and trudged on until he came to a deep donga on the edge of a bush. Strange to say, he was terribly afraid of the dark. He sat down in the donga, and sang at the top of his voice to drive away the evil spirits and the ghosts. Beetles had not come, and he would thrash him when he did, just to make him quicker the next time he sent him on an errand.

It was nearing sunset, and already in the donga it was gloomy and chilly. A slight haze was rolling up the valley. It was a time of reunion at all the kraals, when the women

returned from getting wood, the girls from frightening birds in the amabele gardens, and the boys came back with the herds. There was a bleating and lowing, sounds of laughter and chatter borne on the breeze, then there was peace in the kraals while the people ate.

It was a melancholy time of the day to any person who happened to be outside the pale of human affection.

> "In the night
> There were witnesses, cohorts about me to left and to right,
> Powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware;
> I repressed, got through them as hardly as struggling there
> 'As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
> Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
> And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled, and shot
> Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge."
>
> —Robert Browning.

Pongola's wives and the people at his kraal feared him very much, but they did not love him. Now he was left alone in the dark with the creatures of his own imagination. No fine thoughts nor feelings were his, only a fearful trembling, a horrible dread of the unknowable. He dare not move until "Beetles" came. Suppose the boy did not come, and he was left alone in the donga all night? The ghosts and abataketi with which he was wont to frighten other people surrounded, mocked, and tormented him, until he was bathed in perspiration. He was wallowing on the ground in a frenzy of fear when "Beetles" appeared, conducting a young native who had just been liberated from gaol.

It took Pongola some few minutes to recover from the fit of hysteria. When he could speak, he said to the gaol-bird, Nkone:

"Is all well? Have you seen Maseba?"

"Yebo," Nkone said. "It was not difficult, because all the prisoners share a common yard."

"How is Maseba?"

"He is fat and handsome and full of life."

"Ehe! It is good! Did he mention about the ox again?" queried Pongola.

"He told me to say that if you can use magic, to make Lydia love him, and gain the permission of Guida to their marriage, the ox is yours. Moreover, he begged you not to injure the girl, for she was wonderfully beautiful, but to give her muti or frighten her into marrying him. He said

that his heart had been burning for her all the years he had been in prison."

"Did 'Beetles' tell you that Guida attributed her beauty and grace to the fact that she had been baptised?"

"Yes; but he said that you could frighten her into giving up the new customs and beliefs."

The two men sat and whispered together in the darkness, until a silver crescent rose in the violet sky, and then they sought shelter in a neighbouring kraal.

The indoda was afraid to refuse hospitality, because Pongola was a famous witch-doctor, and might bring ruin on the kraal and its people.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THE BEST IS LOVE."

It was quite clear to everyone that Agnes set the fashion in shawls at Ekuseni. Speaking broadly, the girls got up with the sun, and went to bed with the sun. The early mornings were chilly, and that weird hour after sunset, which saw Pongola in a frenzy of fear, often dark and foggy.

It was then that shawls were worn. The wondrous beauty of the tablecloth of Agnes aroused the other girls to emulation, and many and varied were the tablecloths that appeared at Ekuseni.

Certain mission stations seem to follow distinct styles of dress. It is shown in the way of wearing the iduku, or headdress, if not in the texture and colour of the iduku itself.

At Ekuseni the girls wore any colour they liked during the week, but on Sundays white amaduku, drawn straight across the forehead and flowing back over the shoulders in the manner of confirmation veils, prevailed.

Very picturesque the girls looked as they trooped down the avenue to the church on the edge of the wood

They were graceful, well-developed creatures, and the discipline while at school made them at least quietly happy and self-contained. At home in their kraals, or when having cast aside the good Christian influence under which they have been sheltered and trained, and having drifted to the towns, they may become boisterous and repellent, but at least at school they are amenable to well-exercised authority.

The slight estrangement between Margaret and Hugh had broadened and deepened, and now they were far more apart than they had ever been. Suggested happiness, when chilled or repressed, often causes bitterness. Margaret was almost ashamed for having allowed herself to become frivolous with Hugh, and for ever daring to imagine that he might be in love with her. She rated herself soundly about this. "He is too keen about his work to allow himself to do such a thing; I, too, ought to be above such weaknesses."

Such passages as the following troubled her: "God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the great." Was it possible that even such weakness, as Margaret called love, was chosen by God to work great things in His Kingdom? Unconsciously, she was creating a deity after her own imagination, and giving Him attributes for hardness and discipline, which at the moment seemed best to fit in, with her own arguments. His Kingdom was narrowed down to mean just the special doctrine and order of proceedings to which she herself adhered, and found satisfying. "Thy Kingdom come" was infused with a particular and personal interpretation, all unconsciously, by this good woman. If anyone had told her that she prayed in Our Lord's words that her own opinions and arguments might predominate, and that the particular branch of Christ's Church to which she belonged might overweigh and confound all other sorts of religious effort, she would have repudiated the idea as blasphemous and impossible. Often she missed the answer to her prayers, because they came in an unexpected manner. There were many blessings and much happiness thrown in her path for which she prayed, but stepped over them, so to speak, and went on her way sighing, or with a patient air of submission and martyrdom. God meant most of us to be a great deal happier than we are, and He has provided the means with our other daily bread, but many people, like Margaret, set it aside, saying: "Christians were not meant to have luxuries."

The girls had trooped into the little church the Sunday after the offering of the ox. They filled the whole of one side of the aisle, and two or three seats of the other, while the younger children squatted on the matting in the middle aisle. The rest of the outside congregation was crowded into a few seats, and the heathen and unbaptised sat on mats at the back of the font. It was a bright, sunny morning, and the girls who had draped themselves in the bright, many-coloured tablecloth shawls discarded them. Margaret sat at the back of the aisle, just near the font. Trooper Wilson and Barbara Harrison sat together, and shared books during the service. She looked sweet and winsome in an embroidered linen frock, and a Panama hat, draped with a brightly-coloured Oriental scarf, set jauntily on her glossy back hair. Trooper Wilson looked ruddy and—just a man, in his tweed suit, and was unable to find his places in the Zulu book of Common Prayer, but it did not matter, because

he seemed to enjoy being helped by Miss Barbara. He took his part in the Te Deum and hymns quite lustily, and Barbara piped out a sweet treble soprano to his bass. It was grand to feel oneself part of the whole when the congregation stood up to sing. There was scarcely standing room in some parts of the little church, but everyone struggled up somehow, and everyone sung, the Zulu men and girls, naturally, taking their parts in the beautiful old English service, so dear and home-like to English people all over the world. In some native Christian churches, I admit, the singing is rancorous and boisterous, but at Ekuseni it was not so. The girls were properly trained, and their voices were mellow and sweet-toned. All Zulus have a natural taste for singing. That is one of their many gifts, which is lying latent, or is mis-developed, not, as at Ekuseni, being disciplined and consecrated. With a rustle of snow-white pinafores and starched print frocks, and the white amaduku flowing back from the reverent attentive faces, the school girls rose to sing; the other members of the congregation followed, and then depth, height, and tone were infused into the Te Deum.

The old Zulu habit of giving an isibonga, or song of praise to a chief, which was chanted standing up, has given place to the Christian's Te Deum, a song of praise from the children who are just learning to know their Heavenly Father. Is imperfect knowledge acceptable to Him? When we were children, and the big words were too hard for us to understand, and we yet felt awed and hushed in the great big church to which we were taken, and told it was God's House, did not we, some of us, thank God with our hearts, although we could not say the words?

Margaret was wearing one of those soft shades of green which suited her to perfection. The rich hair was "pulled away," as the girls said, under the broad-brimmed Gainsborough hat, which tilted its brim on one side, and lent itself to her personality in a bewitching manner, of which Margaret was quite unconscious. As Hugh swept up the aisle, preceded by the two native catechists, he felt an inspiration from the nearness of her presence. He glanced at her when there was an opportunity, such as the giving out of the number of a hymn, and the devout uplifted look in those dark eyes under the shady hat as they met his gave him a hushed feeling of delight.

Hugh had quite made up his mind, and that was to seek an opportunity of proposing to Margaret, and to confess

that he, at present, saw no opportunity of getting married, but to win her consent to an engagement. For days he had tried to bring this about, but each time she had thwarted him. She kept severely out of his way, and snubbed every attempt of his to approach her. "She seems to resent the idea," he said, sadly, *sotto voce.* It was only in church that he seemed to get an opportunity of meeting her face to face, and of guessing how she was thinking or feeling.

"She is a good woman," he said, "but she does not think of me, and yet I had thought . . . The fact of the matter is I am far below her level of spirituality. I must strain up higher, and meet her on her own ground. Women are so much better than us men."

One of Margaret's "great things" was to train the girls to an intelligent knowledge of the Christian worship, in which they took so melodious and devout a part. One of her greatest delights was to see those bowed white-veiled heads before her, and to see what an intelligent interest they took in Hugh's impressive sermon.

She prayed that the gift of greater insight of character and breadth of love might be hers. As she arose from her knees, strangely enough, she met Hugh's eyes, questioning, wholly tender, almost pathetic in their earnestness, fixed upon her. He was about to give out a hymn, and paused with his hand on the open book. An uplifted light was on his face; he gave out the number, and read the first verse. It ended thus:

"Sipe ukutanda." (Therefore give us love.)

His whole face softened as again he glanced at Margaret. This time she shifted her gaze, fenced with his meaning, stepped over the good things that were offered for her acceptance. Strangely enough, it was Hugh who was up on the heights, and she down in the depths, during the singing of the hymn. She sang in a chill, self-repressed way, and his full rich tones inspired the girls, as he let himself go, and revelled in the beautiful meaning, the spiritual side of our nature which is human yet divine.

At the end of the hymn there was a commotion at the rear of the church amongst the heathen, who were packed in the space behind the font and in the doorway. Two heathen men, in skins and feathers, and scarcely any other clothing, were seeking entrance. It was Pongola and Maseba, looking fat and sleek. It was his first appearance in the

neighbourhood since he was let out of gaol. Margaret got up to marshall the people even closer together to make room for the newcomers. They were obliged to leave their shields and sticks outside, and somehow they squeezed in. Opposite the open doorway, on the other side of the wagon road, was the new and much larger church, which was in the course of erection. The black ox was grazing in the nave which was to be.

The sermon was on love. Maseba had heard the Umfundisi before on that matter. He hugged his fat knees, and shifted his gaze, uncomfortably. It was God's idea, as against man's idea—the Zulu's conception. It was a wonderful sermon, cleverly handled, delicate, yet perfectly direct and convincing. Hugh drew a picture of man travelling upward, through all the phases of his nature, until he had attained to the measure of a perfect man—God's call to every one of them present.

After the blessing, and the sevenfold amen, had risen, fallen, and died away into silence, so that only the droning of the bees in the vaulted roof and the lowing of the black ox outside broke the hush that followed, the whole congregation knelt in silent prayer. Hugh and the catechists threaded their way through the crowded centre aisle, managing, somehow, not to tread on the children's fingers. In a minute or two the whole congregation streamed out into the sunshine, and many people gathered round Maseba, solemnly shook hands, and questioned him as to his life in gaol.

As the girls turned towards the school, Maseba disengaged himself from his companions, and saluted Lydia as she passed with her first finger linked with that of Agnes.

Lydia's handsome face clouded over, and she drew herself up proudly.

"That ugly, fat old man," she whispered, scornfully, to Agnes.

"Au!" said one of a merry group of girls who were walking behind the two. "It is clear that Lydia does not love Maseba." This was the only reference to the sermon that was made by them.

Agnes was going to be married to Alexander in a few weeks. Since Alexander had been properly pledged to Agnes he had become steadier. He had still the greatest aptitude for nonsense, and kept Hugh from getting dull, but he left the other girls alone. The lovers were allowed to see each

other on Sundays and half-holidays. On these occasions Alexander, who had long outgrown his patched suit and had bought himself another, came to pay his respects to Margaret. Agnes at these times always had to be sent for, and then the two young people solemnly had tea together in the big school-room. An enamelled tea-pot and a special small tray was set apart for these occasions. The cook girl would bring the tray and set it down on a desk, where Alexander sat, with Agnes on the opposite side. The lovers would solemnly drink tea together, and as solemnly look at each other, but rarely seemed to have much to say.

The lobola had been paid for Agnes, and the wedding day fixed. Her father had sent her money to buy herself a white silk dress. Margaret took the two girls, Agnes and Lydia, into The City to buy the silk, and the girls, with help and suggestion from the ladies at the mission made the dress.

Alexander wrote a note almost every day, and the following is the *fac simile* of one of them, written on an odd scrap of note-paper:—

"Oh dear darling I am finished with love give me your heart then all shall be finished. My loving tell me how do you love me. I am love you like cat to loving mouse you must that you to love me like this oh indeed I love you."

There was no stop, but the note was written in English; therefore, vastly superior.

There was grand excitement until the wedding was over. Alexander had built himself a square house on another part of the mission farm. Hugh encouraged him to plant trees, and to grow English vegetables. A garden was laid out; a path made up to the front door. There was a window on either side, and a small verandah. Agnes and he were very happy in their little home, and when Hugh wanted an extra pair of hands for any work Alexander was only too happy to come.

Lydia's troubles seemed to increase as her friend found safety and happiness. Two days after the wedding, and exactly six weeks from the time of saying good-bye to him, Guida, her father, was eaten by a crocodile while crossing the Umhlatuze. He had been to see his friend Sembata, who lived on the other side of the river.

Sembata never, indeed, found Lucy, but from that time onwards he seemed to take a delight in litigation. The Resident Magistrate of the district had referred him to the

Court of his chief to settle the indaba of the cow. That identical cow lived for three years in the Courts long after it was dead and eaten, and Sembata lost all his goats and money in expenses. Sembata was an amakolwa, and was not held in high esteem by his chief. In any case, the indaba of the cow went on, and Sembata never got redress.

Sembata had seen the accident, and it was he who brought the news. Poor Lydia gave vent to a wail, and went and flung herself face downwards in the grass in utter desolation.

"Maye babo! Baba, my heart told me I would not see you again. You have sheltered me from all the troubles of the Christian girls. Maye mame!"

Margaret and Barbara, to whom Lydia seemed especially to cling, tried to comfort the girl. Everyone was very kind.

When the first wild grief had subsided, Lydia explained that she knew she would not be allowed to stay at the school any longer.

It proved to be true. Her heathen brothers came to fetch her. It was a sad, sad day; the girls cried in sympathy. Margaret and Hugh, too, did all they could to persuade the young men to leave the girl, but to no purpose. They, however, promised to be kind to her, and not to force the girl to give up her faith.

"I never would; you could kill me first," the girl said, quietly.

"If she wishes we will be pleased, for it is not the custom for us to be Christians," the eldest brother said.

The girls loaded Lydia with presents of beads and trinkets; Margaret gave her a little book, "The Lives of the Saints," which she could read in English; Barbara gave her her photograph, and told her to write to her friend.

Then, sorrowfully, Lydia went out from Ekuseni, "the House of Dawn," into the darkness.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF USIJUBA.

"AND so you want to go home, you lazy dog! You just want to see your women! Bah! . . . ." Here the speaker had a violent fit of hiccoughs, and that, together with his splutterings of rage, almost choked him.

He was lying, partly dressed, on a sofa in a room, the atmosphere of which was foul with stale smoke and the smell of spirits. Outside, across a dusty stretch of country, rose the headgear of the mine against a clear blue sky.

Inside there were empty bottles, pipes, glasses, and soiled magazines of a questionable type, with illustrations displaying half-naked white women and loud, coarse men. uSijuba knew these pictures well; he was always picking them up and gloating over them. In the general cleaning out of rubbish, which was part of his duty, he carefully sorted out these pictures and tacked them up in his "ikaya." the little iron house, with a glazed window and door with proper fastenings, which was his own sanctum. It stood at the top of the steep, dusty yard, near a rubbish heap.

His master was a "big boss," and came of one of the greatest and oldest families in England. We will call him, for the sake of convenience, Frederick Marmaduke Frampton. He was a poor upholder of the honour of his own house, or of his country's greatness. He swore about his native land, and his "damned relations," who gave him such a beggarly pittance to hide his disgraceful head in an obscure country.

Out of sight, out of mind. He could do what he liked, so long as he did not trouble them. What Frederick Marmaduke liked was to live an animal life, far below that of a self-respecting beast of the field. However, he was a great stickler for being treated as a very superior human being. He said that uSijuba, whom he called Dick, by-the-bye, was —— cheeky. uSijuba never really cheeked him; he only was honestly surprised at the white man's behaviour. He had arrived at the house of Frederick Marmaduke with an

inborn intuition that white men were superior. His master almost took his breath away, but he never said anything. Possibly, he would not have stayed at all, only his experience with "the missus" had strengthened him to put up with things. The "missus" was easy to get on with, and there was very little work to do at her house. He just had to take notes and messages, and to show the amakosi into the rooms where she, in beautiful flowing robes, waited to receive him. There were two other boys who did the work of the house, and were well paid. uSijuba was anxious to get money, and that was why he went. He wanted to get enough money to lobola Lydia before Maseba came out of prison. He was determined to take a rise out of old Maseba, and the only way to do it was to save his money. The atmosphere of the missus' house troubled him very much, and he ran away. There were many natives from his part of Zululand in Johannesburg.

He was constantly meeting them, and they, in their coarse, outspoken way, told him many things about the white people of which he had never even guessed before.

In his previous acquaintance with Europeans he had been particularly fortunate. At Ekuseni, Hugh and the amakosazana seemed to be very high above him, almost out of comprehension, only they had smiled on him, and had shown him such kindly interest and goodwill, that he had always felt willing to do anything to win their approval. His mistress in Durban had redeeming family graces which appealed to him, and "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Certainly, she had left the children almost entirely to his care, and they had drunk in his folk-lore, his superstitions, and scarcely delicate way of thinking and looking at things. "My little Reggie is so smart," she told her friends. "He speaks kafir like a native. He is a smart kid for nearly five. I don't speak kafir, you know. The children can't speak English yet; Girlie's just beginning, you know. They will learn when they go to school."

It never occurred to uSijuba that the children could learn harm from him. It was not his responsibility to judge in such matters.

Meanwhile, the missus caressed Girlie's fair curls, petted the boys, and smiled at her smart friends.

"Girlie will learn English when she goes to school; won't you, my pet?"

"Yebo, mame," whispered the little girl, hanging her head; "n'abafana futi." ("Yes, mother, and the boys too.")

uSijuba loved children, and certainly had an engaging manner with them. He wanted to work in a house where there were children, but his friend told him of the missus who would give him plenty of money. uSijuba found his way to a mission church, and attended a night school, when he went to work for Frederick Marmaduke. After a time his heart remembered his home and Lydia, and he sought an opportunity of telling his master he wished to leave.

"You lazy dog!" Frederick Marmaduke said, in a fit of rage. Then he swore and cursed, accused uSijuba of being a libertine, and finally reached under the sofa for his boot, and threw it at the young Zulu. The boot crashed into the mirror at the back of the sideboard, and uSijuba escaped.

The young Zulu sat down in his house, and began to write a letter to Lydia, begging her to come to Johannesburg, and to be sure to dress as a raw native woman in a blanket, and to dress her hair out in the elongated mass, as is the custom of the married Zulu woman. He went on to explain that the girls in European attire were often troubled by both black and white men.

He paused to consider directions as to the journey. He glanced up at the nearly naked or suggestively veiled white women which graced the wall of his house. He did not gain an inspiration from their bold flashing eyes. There were several men in evening dress, and with heavy cigars, and hats tilted at a jocular angle. uSijuba thought them very fine. He did not know which he admired the most—the men with riding breeches and leather gaiters, or the men in dress clothes. Right in the midst of this array of pictures there was a brightly-coloured card, hung up with a faded ribbon, with a picture of a white child kneeling in prayer, and a text in Zulu: "Make me a clean heart, O, God"—the gift of Hugh to uSijuba when he was a boy.

He had got all these things from the white people. If the white people had never come into his life he would not have had the suggestion of praying for a clean heart, or the low pictures, which really were tabooed by the police, but cleverly secured by Frederick Marmaduke. The white people had passed on many habits and thoughts to him. He had learned to make a swagger, and to be smartly dressed, like his master. His own Zulu personality was strong within him

all the time, and the blending of the old with the new had a very grotesque effect, as we shall see.

The inspiration did not come to uSijuba, but an interruption did.

The bawling of Frederick Marmaduke, and the smashing of glass from the dining-room, made uSijuba throw down his pen, start up, reach for his soft felt hat, stuff a low magazine into his pocket, and slip out of the side gate.

He cautiously made his way round to the dining-room window. Frederick Marmaduke, in reaching for his boot, had toppled over on to the floor, and was too drunk to get up. He had evidently dragged at the tablecloth for support, for bottles, decanters, and glasses were all smashed on top of him, and he was wallowing in the mess.

"Come and pick me up and put me to bed, you —— —— —— nigger! I'll sjambok you within an inch of your life! Ugh! You —— —— devil!"

uSijuba dodged back out of sight, and grinned.

"I'll leave him where he is," he said. "If I pick him up he'll only fall down again. The last time I put him to bed he fell out, and cut his head open against the chest of drawers. If he had died the police might have thought I had murdered him."

uSijuba strutted off down the street, until, meeting some natives from Nkandhla who worked on the mine, they retired together to a waste piece of ground, and uSijuba produced his pictures. uSijuba was an advanced pupil at the night school. He translated some of the jokes into Zulu, and his companions roared with laughter. He himself was not so very much amused. If the white people had such jokes, why should not natives enjoy them? uSijuba saw no harm in them; but he had given up obscene Zulu songs since his encounter with Hugh's standard of righteousness. It was an English book, and English was always right. uSijuba was home-sick.

He put away the book, and told his friends how his bones ached for Zululand, but his master swore at him, and called him a lazy dog.

"Umlomo is a beast!" the natives said. Then they fell to talking of Frederick Marmaduke, whom the natives called "Umlomo" (the mouth).

Possibly, even Frederick Marmaduke's self-respect might have suffered a resurrection if he had known their opinion of him.

All the natives decided that uSijuba could not leave until "Umlomo" had paid him the money due to him, and that he must ask and ask for it, until he received it.

"You could have run away if it had not been for Lydia, but for her sake you must take the blows from 'Umlomo' and wait for a patient moment."

"'Umlomo's' blows and kicks do not hurt much," uSijuba said, manfully; "one can always dodge them. I hate all this worry and trouble; if it were not for Lydia I would run away."

"Do you not know that her father is dead, and her brothers have gone home?" said a newcomer to the Rand.

He was surrounded by eager questioners, and then the natives wailed and moaned with uSijuba.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WHITE UMBRELLA.

Barbara and Mr. Wilson were sharing a huge white sun umbrella. It was really quite shady in the wood; I cannot think why they wanted it. There was a winding path cut through the trees. It dipped into hollows, where moss and ferns grew on the banks, and rose over the crest of a hill, and then, bending and dipping, it wound round the summit of another wooded hill, on a sheltered terrace overlooking a glorious stretch of country. Barbara and Mr. Wilson were always going "to see the view," or "to catch a peep of the sea" from the woodland terrace. They usually took the large white umbrella, lined with green, to prevent other people's view. However, Hugh, from his cottage, always knew when they were in the wood. He caught glimpses of the white umbrella amongst the foliage, or when a stray and more persevering gleam of sunshine filtered through the branches, catching the sheen of the white umbrella and publishing its whereabouts to all the world. Hugh was particularly interested in the progress of the white umbrella. It somehow fascinated him. He watched the white umbrella gliding along smoothly. He saw it stop. He pictured the happiness it was sheltering. It moved, and he lost sight of it amongst the foliage; then suddenly it would catch the gleam of sunshine, and he would see it again. It disappeared down the natural leafy tunnel which led on to the woodland terrace, where it was entirely lost.

Hugh had altered. He had been living at concert pitch for weeks past. It neither suited him nor improved him. His face had grown thin and painfully ascetic. He had given up smoking, because he understood Margaret to say she did not like it; he fasted; he deprived himself of little happinesses and comforts, because he thought she would approve and reward him; in fact, he was following her lead, and had ceased to be the happy-hearted, benevolent fellow we have known. Added to this, he was missing the comforts Alexander had brought into his life. Alexander's buns, bread, and steamed puddings had been practical realities; also,

Alexander the Great's absurdities had amused and invigorated him. Alexander's successor could not cook; his bread was heavy, his puddings lumpy and stodgy. Hugh told himself he had a soul above food, thinking to follow "Her" lead. If his soul was superior his body was not. He often exhibited a sharp, irritable temper, and said sarcastic things to the natives. Poor Hugh was getting dyspeptic and miserable, but he only thought he was following "Her" lead in the strenuous spiritual life. Somehow, he did not get any "forrurder" or nearer to the object of his devotions, and in his heart of hearts he did not feel a better Christian. It was as if he were saying to his Creator: "Why did You make me a healthy, happy man? I would rather be a saint in a stained-glass window."

He had been watching the progress of the white umbrella with a brutal bitterness in his heart. A sinister, almost evil, look swept over his poor thin face. He sighed. "If I were not a parson, what a wicked devil I should be," he murmured. Just then the new boy came to tell him that the lean-to kitchen had suddenly fallen in.

He strolled round to the back, and surveyed the ruin. The wattle and daub wall had fallen on to the stove; the shelves, roof and crockery had all gone together.

"Ugh! A fine mess, isn't it?" he said to the native boy. "Now, perhaps, they'll *have* to give me a new house."

He laughed sarcastically, and sank down on to an overturned bucket, for the poor fellow was always tired now.

The white umbrella was coming round the cottage, and in a minute two happy young persons were beside Hugh.

"We've come to tell you something," said Jack Wilson, with a radiant face.

Hugh winced as if he were in pain, then jumped up, and looked politely expectant.

"Come, Barbara," whispered Jack to the girl, who was pretending to be interested in the ruined kitchen. "We are going to be married," Jack said, drawing Barbara's hand through his arm.

Hugh congratulated him, although the hand he offered was very cold.

"I've brought you some letters," Barbara said, after the usual light chatter on the subject.

Hugh was left with his letters. The first he opened contained three five-pound notes—fifteen pounds of good English money—"for the general purposes of the mission at

Ekuseni, and would the Rev. Hugh Neville please acknowledge through the pages of the Durban daily papers." The note was signed "Durbanite."

Hugh forgot the tangle in which his life seemed to be involved, and he forget his headache. He lifted up his head, and said "Thank you," very reverentially. He had been labouring for years without the Colonists' recognition of his services and goodwill towards their country; now it had come. He was so tired and spiritually weary, and a whisper of peace and encouragement was wafted to him, just when he needed it. Did anyone care that he was spent and heart-sick? Had he not prayed desperately, almost bitterly, piling on prayers, restraints, services, acts of devotion, keeping of obscure saints' days, vigils, fasts, kneeling in abject prostration, the whole attitude of body, soul, and spirit expressing a passionate outcry for peace—"Bless me, me also, oh, my Father?"

Hugh spread out the three five-pound notes on his knee. He handled them carefully, almost with a miserly interest, but his thin, drawn face had softened, and there was a glad light in his eyes. He leaned comfortably in his old Madeira chair, and held up the notes to the light. He rejoiced in a quiet way, and his thoughts were drawn upward. Elaborate phrases and petitions were beyond him; all he could say was "Thank you." Recogniton and appreciation by a fellow-human being, who was unknown to him, had come into his life—had been sent by an all-loving Father just when he needed it. The reaction from the past few weeks' wretchedness made him tired, like a happy child who had been in trouble and was comforted by his father. The black ox grazing in the top paddock came within range of vision. The ox seemed to be set in a little picture by the window-frame. There was Litany in the little church, but Hugh did not hear, or, rather, he heard without noticing, the catechist ringing the bell. The catechist sang the Litany when he found the Umfundisi did not come. In a few minutes Hugh was fast asleep, with a happy smile on his face.

Meanwhile, Barbara and Jack Wilson were on the terrace.

"I do so like—in fact, I am fond of—Hugh Neville," Barbara said. "I hate to see him looking so chill and drear."

"The poor chap does look ill," Jack said.

"Jack!" Barbara stopped dead in her walk, and there was a world of expression in that word.

Mr. Wilson turned to meet the eager look of entreaty in his sweetheart's brown eyes.

"What is it, little girl?" he said.

Now, Miss Barbara believed that her big lover was capable of doing most things, since he had succeeded in winning her wilful heart; therefore, to his question she replied:

"You must help to bring those ridculous people together."

"Who?" said Jack. "What people?"

"Oh! don't put on a superior air, and pretend you don't know," Barbara said, petulantly.

"Well, my dear little girl"—here Mr. Wilson's arm found its way round Barbara's trim waist, in spite of the hand which tried to push it off, for he caught the fingers of the said hand, and held them tightly. There was some interruption to serious conversation; afterwards he resumed: "If you will persist in speaking in enigmas, and fail to mention names, how can I guess whom you mean by those ridiculous people?"

"Anyone can tell I mean Hugh Neville and Margaret.

"Yes, I thought there was something in that quarter. Still, what do you want me to do, dear?"

"I know you don't appreciate Margaret, Jack, and you say her special style of goodness irritates you; but, Jack, I am very fond of Hugh, and Margaret is a dear, sweet woman. You could help them, you know." Barbara shot such a loving, trustful glance up at Mr. Wilson, that he was both flattered and perplexed. "We are so happy," whispered Barbara, blushing, "that I want everyone else to be happy too."

The white umbrella hid the interruption that followed, then Mr. Wilson tried to explain that it was always dangerous to interfere, or to help people to come to an understanding.

"I want to say so much, and I do not know how to express my meaning, only . . . you're a pig, Jack!"

Mr. Wilson grew very tender and gentle.

"Listen, little girl, you and I must not set ourselves up to act Providence to other people."

"What a dear, manly fellow he is," thought Barbara. "He is far more religous than I, yet he professes nothing."

"Jack," said Barbara, after a pause in the conversation, during which the white umbrella had made some progress,

"do you think it wrong to follow any line of thought or action which injures one's health? Is it not as much a sin as deliberate suicide to continue praying for acts of devotion to the injury of the body, consequently, to the peace of mind and the good of the soul? I cannot forget the look on Hugh Neville's face lately. . . . Jack, do you remember saying, or, rather, agreeing with me, that there was something very sinister and repulsive in the faces of some of the priests on the Continent, or those one met in Rome? . . . . Hugh is getting that look—a look of unnatural self-repression, which leads to devilish expression. And, Jack——"

But he would not allow her to proceed. He drew her very close to him, and looked down into the troubled eyes.

"Dearest, if Hugh Neville is in distress of some sort or other, dare we not leave him to his Creator, who understands? If you and I are anxious for his welfare, surely he has a better Friend than we, who will not desert him? Little girl, do not be anxious for the salvation of other people's souls; there is One whose concern it is, and I have often noticed that when people claim the monopoly of that business it really resolves itself into 'He or she must think and worship in the way that I do, or he or she cannot be saved.' Possibly, God knows a better way for him or her, more suited to his or her temperament."

This is great, big, ruddy Jack Wilson, who was scarcely thought to be religious, yet what a Christian gentleman he was! Barbara's heart swelled with satisfaction and pride. Surely this was a man to lean upon, and with whom to trust one's life.

She looked up from his coat-pocket, against which her cheek was resting, and smiled contentedly.

"I'll tell you what I will do," said Mr. Wilson, after the umbrella had made further progress. "I don't believe Neville gets enough to eat, and that's enough to make a man feel possessed with devils. I'll look in and put the new boy up to a wrinkle or two in the way of cooking. Neville knows scarcely anything about it, and, possibly, to-day, now the kitchen stove is buried in debris, he'll fare worse than ever. During the war I picked up many ideas."

"Jack," murmured Barbara, in a disgusted tone, "Margaret actually sent the books that Hugh and she go through together down to the cottage for him to audit alone to-day.

I heard her giving a verbal message to a girl, and I felt I could have just smacked her for it!"

"Don't you worry," Jack said, with a final kiss, as he left her and the umbrella on the terrace.

It took Jack some time to find the new boy; then he made him hunt up some stew and bones, which were in a safe, luckily unburied.

Jack superintended the making of an outside fire, and the cooking of some soup. The only bread that could be found was as heavy as a brick. Jack sent the new boy up to Barbara to beg for a loaf.

Inside the church Margaret was interceding for all those afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate, and outside the church Barbara and Jack were making this petition a practical reality.

"Now, then, you poor specimen," Jack Wilson said to the native, "don't you even know how to make a fire? Hurry up and get some wood, and don't stand staring! Stay a moment! Do you call this bread? Then I think you had better go and bury it!"

It was astonishing the capacity for work and intelligence the new boy showed under Jack's tuition.

Hugh awakened just as Jack set the tray on the study table.

"Hallo! Wilson," he said, heartily shaking hands. "I've had such a wonderful dream. I saw the black ox covered with five-pound notes, being led by . . . the Lady Warden to the gate-way of a pretty, comfortable brick house, which was mine. Think of it. I had altogether a comfortable safe feeling in my dream, as if I were being thought for and taken care of." Hugh laughed.

"I hope you were well fed, too, Mr. Neville. I happened to be passing, and I reminded your boy that you would want luncheon just as usual ,although the kitchen had given way. . . . . I'll pick up the five-pound notes which you throw about so recklessly. See, here is another letter still unopened."

"So there is," said Hugh, cheerfully. "This soup is good. There's some hope for that new boy of mine yet. . . . It's from Roy. . . . ." He glanced hastily into the closely-written letter. "He's coming out; I'm to keep it a secret. There is something wrong with Margaret, he thinks. Her letters have been getting more constrained every

mail for the past seven weeks. I am sailing two days after this is posted, and shall be with you about a week after you receive this. I cannot express how glad I am to enter into the fulness of life which you enjoy, and to share the good measure which is offered to everyone of us if we would fulfil the conditions. My heart aches, Hugh, for the frivolous, callous lives that are being lived here. I look into the faces of the people I meet in the Strand or Piccadilly. The hundreds of faces there are that look feverishly anxious for gain, or morbid, or stolidly indifferent, and I think 'Life in all its fulness has been won for each of you, and you only realise a portion of it.' It is strange that I do not feel so sorry for the very poor. Poverty has its compensations, but for the mass of English people, with their effete artificial lives, my heart burns. 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' Do you call the giddy rushing after pleasure, or taxing themselves to the utmost that they may be rich, life? It seems to me a desecration. Again, I have no patience with those very good people who merely exist on morals, Biblical texts, or religious systems, and hope for life in the world to come. It is the religion of Do, not Don't, that appeals to me. . . ."

Hugh broke off suddenly, with an apologetic smile. "There are pages and pages," he added.

Mr. Wilson was contented now that he saw Hugh Neville more like himself. Only once did that unnatural, strained look come over his face, and that was when he gathered up the account books and put them by on a shelf.

"I cannot do these," he said, "without . . . the Lady Warden being at hand. They were sent down to me this morning. I am afraid, if she wants them, she must come for them."

"Do you go to spend Sunday at the Homestead as you used?" Mr. Wilson asked, "because, if not, I will invite myself to lunch with you."

"No, I don't spend Sundays at the Homestead now. It was an unrecognised rule. Do come and eat with me, Wilson." Hugh looked up, eagerly, at the mounted man. "Could Miss Barbara spare you? You always dine on Sundays with the ladies, but——"

The flash of intelligence and comprehension that flashed from man to man completed the sentence.

"You'd better send an order to the butcher by me, or Sunday will come and you will have forgotten about your

dinner again until too late. I have a tremendous appetite, I warn you." Mr. Wilson laughed.

"I was angry with you this morning for being so happy." Hugh smiled as he handed the written order. "You are a good fellow."

"Women have a wonderful way with them, and Barbara actually dragged me into a religious discussion with her this morning—I, who seldom go to church!" Mr. Wilson was longing to talk about his sweetheart, but his innate tact and courtesy prevented him from expounding to Hugh.

"So long!" he said, riding off. "Then you and I will smoke, lounge, and 'bach.' to our heart's content on Sunday."

It was not difficult to keep the secret of Roy's arrival from Margaret, for Hugh never saw her to speak tc for the whole week.

On Sunday morning, after a whispered conference on the woodland terrace, Miss Barbara dismissed her lover to minister to Hugh's necessity.

"It just serves Margaret right if she is left alone with her superior goodness," she said. "Only, Jack, we shall miss our walk and talk—but, still, go along." She gave him a little push.

"You see how much easier it would be if you would consent to marry me almost at once. We could cheer up Neville then. . . . Barbara, my darling! . . . ."

Barbara succeeded in disengaging her fingers, and they parted.

"I refuse to submit to this treatment next Sunday. I have other plans," he said.

"What," she said, pausing in her retreat.

"Oh, that's a secret," and Mr. Wilson looked delightfully mysterious.

Barbara came two paces nearer, and looked bewitchingly entreating.

"Tell me," she said.

"I can't; I promised," he replied.

They looked at each other.

"Jack, you're a pig!" she said, walking steadily off.

Next Saturday brought Roy and Eva Murchison. The excitement of the arrival seemed a dream.

Hugh and Margaret found themselves talking naturally and happily, and that seemed a dream, too.

The whole party was gathered in the pretty drawing-room at the Homestead.

Roy was bursting with health, happy nonsense, and a fine enthusiasm.

He stood on the hearth-rug, and expounded about his journey, and the room seemed full of laughing, chatting people. Margaret sat by the low tea-table, and Hugh on the sofa, watching the light and shade on her face. She had brought some knitting, and was trying to compose her nervous delight at the strange happenings. She had been striving for a contemplative, placid goodness, and, somehow, all her dreams and ideals were shattered by the inrush of outside influences. She glanced up several times to make sure that Roy was a missionary after all. Somehow, he seemed so unlike one, or, rather, her conception of one. She had just got her convictions and opinions so neat and sleek, and now they were being upset every minute. That happy, laughing face above the Roman collar was her brother Roy, not one bit altered from the laughter-loving, impetuous boy of her girlhood days, except that he was bigger, taller, and more of a man. Even becoming an ordained priest of God had not damped his ardour nor spoilt his fun. She knew at once that her suggestive tone or repressive glance would have no effect upon her brother, although Hugh had become altered and like pulp under the process. Even Hugh was growing away from her influence lately. Whether she willed it or not, she was caught in the vortex of happy, natural life that was going on all around her. She found herself forced to smile, nay, actually to laugh, at Roy's sallies.

"Eva says she has come to keep house for me. In Swaziland, too."

Eva, a pretty girl of eighteen, wore a mouse-coloured cloth gown, which was the perfection of elegant simplicity. She was very like the other Murchisons, but not beautiful like Margaret.

"I am going to keep house for you for a month, and then join Major and Mrs. Johnson, in Pretoria, for Ida Johnson's wedding."

"I am going to send you off to Pretoria from here," Roy said. "As it is, you have turned me out of Margaret's spare room, and I have to go down and share Hugh's diggings. It's really going to be diggings, isn't it Hugh? We are going to dig a hole in the ground to live in, because, I assure you, that cottage is coming down."

There was a laugh at this.

"Who was the native you were speaking of with the swelled head?" Hugh asked.

"The boy who came to you when I was here before—uSijuba. I met him in High Street—I mean West Street—Durban. Eva was with the Johnsons that morning. He really was funny."

CHAPTER XVII.

A SWELLED HEAD.

"Do tell us," said everyone in the room.

"About what?" said Roy.

"Oh! the swelled head," they exclaimed.

"When I arrived in Durban, one of the first people I ran against was Matthews," Roy began.

"'Well, Murchison,' said he, who would ever have expected to see you here? What! and a parson, too! I thought you were going to be a civil engineer? 'Pon my word, you do look well.' Then he joked and chaffed as of yore.

"'I am a parson and a missionary,' I said, as solemnly as I could.

"He showed disapproval. 'Missionaries are a rum lot,' he said; 'think of the harm they do.'

"'Matthews,' said I, still as solemnly as I could, 'come and lunch with me, and be converted.'"

Somehow, when Roy tried to imitate the solemn tone and look he employed, everyone in the room burst out laughing, and began again when Roy looked round, as much as to say, "What are you laughing at?"

"You are ridiculous, Roy," Margaret murmured, as if apologising to herself for her own amusement.

"Matthews and I lunched together at the hotel, and—well, I converted him."

Roy was solemn now, or, rather, there was a quiet undertone of earnestness in his voice when he said "I converted him."

"After luncheon we went up West Street to see the town. I like Durban. It has altered in five years—improved almost out of knowledge—and it was always a clean, picturesque town. Matthews and I strolled along, looking at the gay shops and the ladies, and I rejoicing on *terra firma* again, and the delightful cosmopolitan atmosphere there is about Durban. I communicated some of my satisfaction with life to Matthews, who, as you remember, Margaret, was always somewhat of a grumbler. However, we found that someone, or something, was making a sensation, and groups

of people were pausing to gaze and comment upon something that was happening higher up on our side of the road. We could not make out what it was. Nothing to merit the interference of the police, evidently, for a borough constable was standing in a group to which we became attached. I saw several ladies make angry, disgusted comments to their fellows, and turn away.

"'What is it?' said I to the constable.

"'A bad attack of swelled head in a native—that's all,' he replied, smiling behind his hand. Then he noticed my collar, and looked apologetic at something else he was about to inform me. I smiled reassurance, as much as to say, 'Don't mind me; I'm open to conviction.'

"Just then the crowd parted, and we saw the person of interest—a young native in a dress coat, white waistcoat, riding breeches, and leather gaiters, who was strutting along in a ridiculously conceited way, to the disgust and annoyance of the white population, and to the amusement and admiration of the black. His silk hat was tilted at a rakish angle, and the huge stick he carried was intended to make a sensation. Matthews, always looking out for a peg to hang a grievance, found one.

"'There's a fine production of the missionaries' work! The smple-hearted, innocent, raw Zulu, robbed of his natural graces, and clothed with insolence and every vice under the sun. No wonder the Colonists are up in arms, and present a united front against missionaries.'

"'Wait a minute,' said I, noticing that his remarks were assented to by the looks and comments of the people near us in the crowd. 'I don't suppose that native is a Christian at all. I'll go and talk to him.'

"Matthews followed reluctantly. In a few minutes I threaded my way through the people, and met the native face to face. He looked at me, and the insolent manner vanished, his whole face gladdening. Up went his beringed hand, with the ridiculous expanse of white cuff, in respectful salute.

"'Sakubona, bab 'nkosi!'

"'What!' said I; 'it is uSijuba!'

"'Yebo, 'nkosi!'

"I recognised him when he greeted me. At first I thought he had made a mistake, but he reminded me of my visit five years ago, and of the night he came to throw him-

self on your protection—the very night that his mother was burnt in the mealie garden.

"Matthews felt that he had won my challenge, although he was too polite to say so.

"'Are you a Christian, uSijuba?' I asked.

"'No, 'nkosi; I had to go away to get more money, and I have not wanted to believe since.'

"'Where have you been working?' said I.

"'In Johannesburg, in two places. First with a missus who troubled me, and afterwards with "The Mouth." "The Mouth" was very good at some times—he gave me these clothes—and very bad at other times, when he drank himself nearly dead.'

"Here Matthews interrupted me. He said it was not the etiquette of the town for me to be seen in close conversation with a native—and such a conspicuous one—in the middle of West Street. At which I laughed heartily.

"'If a man has a good heart, and a clear conscience, he does not care much for public opinion,' I replied. Matthews is a good fellow, although a bit soured.

"He said he was quite sure the missionaries had had something to do with the development of that native. He knew the type. I tried to convince Matthews that he knew very little about the natives—either their habits, language, or modes of thought. He laughed, and said that he was quite an old Colonist to me, and I laughed every time he said that we missionaries were responsible for every vice and failing in the modern type. I said the natives were like children, and imitated the habits and dress of every white person who appealed to them. He grudgingly allowed that I knew their language, folk-lore, superstitions, and religious beliefs better than he. I told him I had been studying for five years everything that has ever been written about the Zulus, and now I had come to give them a helping hand, and indirectly to serve South Africa through them. We want a larger knowledge, a loftier ideal, and a better tone in public opinion in South Africa. And we'll get it!"

Hugh put in here, and reminded him of the three five-pound notes he had received from a Durbanite. Everyone had heard about the "first fruits," as those notes came to be called. They were always talking about them.

"I should like to have them framed, only we want them, especially"—Hugh paused, and glanced at Margaret—"especially now I'm to have a new house."

"Is that true?" said Jack Wilson, eagerly. He was sitting on the sofa next to Barbara, who exchanged glances with him.

Everyone turned to Hugh, expectantly, except Margaret, who was knitting and counting her stitches in a difficult pattern.

"Yes," went on Hugh, diffidently. "I heard this morning from headquarters. A vicarage is to be built near the new church, and I am to choose the site. Money has been voted——"

"Hurrah!" broke in Jack Wilson.

"And it is about time!" from Roy.

"But why did you not tell us?" from someone else.

Hugh did not explain the reason he did not tell them before.

"I did not know if I could build," he murmured, and then promptly changed the subject.

"What became of uSijuba?" he asked.

"uSijuba came to see me at the hotel, and talked a good deal of the white man he called 'The Mouth.' He said that for days he refused to let him come, and uSijuba could not run away without his money, because he wanted to buy cattle or goats for lobola. At last, 'The Mouth' called him into his room, and, in a wheedling tone, told him he was very pleased with him. He gave him a dress coat. uSijuba promptly asked for his money."

"And got it?" put in Hugh.

"Yes, indeed," Roy said. "He had come to Durban on his way home. He left the train to collect other debts in Durban, and came to Zululand by the same train as I. He is walking here; I passed him in the post-cart. He will probably be here this evening, perhaps, even now."

Everyone, except Eva, remembered uSijuba, and talked of him.

A native girl, uJesi, came in with an armful of logs for the fire. The evening was getting chill and drear, and nobody seemed inclined to move from the comfortable room. The ladies brought out work, such as did not need much light to accomplish, and the men talked politics, and all drank in eagerly the Home news and ways of looking at things which Roy and Eva had brought with them.

"Have we altered very much?" Margaret thought. Have we lost tone or status by coming to the Colonies?"

"Just as if a missionary could loose tone or status," Margaret would have replied to that thought a few days ago, but since Roy's arrival she had begun to doubt and question things. As the days wore on, she was not quite happy about herself. It was due to Roy's influence, although he never said a word of commiseration or disapproval.

However, to return to the party by the fire.

"If you please," said uJesi, when she had deposited her load of logs, "there is a muntu who wishes to speak to the Umfundis."

"Where is he?" Hugh asked.

"On the verandah, 'nkosi."

"Tell him to come——" but Hugh did not finish; he stepped through the half-open French window, and encountered uSijuba.

The young Zulu doffed the tall silk hat, and beamed with delight. His artificialities and the swelled head were forgotten for the moment.

"Baba, 'nkosi!" he said. "Good morning. I have great joy this moment, when I see you. I cannot speak for it."

He rambled on, half in Zulu and half in queerly-pronounced English.

In a moment or two Hugh put his head round the half-closed door, and said:

"I will say good-night to you all, for I have much to say to uSijuba, and he to me, apparently."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HUGH A BUILDER.

I MIGHT spend time and tire your patience with describing to you how Roy and Hugh shared the tumble-down cottage, and what fun they had in their united attempts at house-keeping, but I must hurry over this part of the stery. Roy insisted that the proper way to roll pastry was with a glass bottle. He said he had read it in one of his sister's fashion books. He made pastry on the study table, and Hugh was driven out into the wood to write his sermons or do his translating, as the cottage only possessed one table. and that the one in the study. The nights and mornings were very cold, and the land took on its winter aspect, with its many shades of khaki and various tints and conditions of the dried-up grass. It was only the gum trees and wattles in the wood which kept verdant green, in spite of the want of rain. Margaret and Barbara kept a few flowers by watering them carefully in the beds and on the flower stands near the house. uSijuba had attached himself to Hugh, and had taken the place of the "new boy," and both men at the cottage felt the benefit of his superior intelligence and cleanliness. The days passed happily, without comment. A new element had crept into the social atmosphere. Roy's unconscious influence was producing a happy effect all round.

After years of living with a black inferior race, Margaret had acquired, without knowing or wishing it, a dictatorial manner. Men who come down from Central Africa will tell you that being shut off from the society of people of their own kind and colour, who, if they do anything, round off the rough edges, and keep one up to the mark, feel that being isolated with inferior people does not improve temper or manners. Men who can acknowledge that have not gone far off the line, but the people who are in real danger of demoralisation are those superior, striving people, who pay little or no regard to the cultivation of social gifts and graces, and do not know when they are falling off.

Margaret was forgetting that to be human was divine. Again, when women live together, and have no man about

the house, and, perhaps, like Margaret, wilfully strive to shut out the intrusive masculine influence, they often become too independent and self-assertive to rise to their best good.

Roy, with his magnetic personality, his manliness, his very human mistakes and weaknesses, stepped into the breach and saved the situation.

Hugh watched Margaret's face when listening intently to some of Roy's nonsense. He saw the girlish appreciation of the ludicrous crowd out the self-repression. He noticed the dimples that came and went, and how gradually it had come about that the beautiful hair was allowed to wave and play about the fine forehead, and was no longer "pulled away at the back," as the girls expressed it. Hugh ached with regret at having missed so much.

"If I had only been a trifle frivolous I might have won her long since, instead of allowing her and myself to tip-toe through life. More haste, less speed. We were in such a hurry to be ethereal, that both of us nearly came a terrible cropper, and I, at least, inhuman and devilish."

He no longer found it difficult to pray. He carried an atmosphere of prayer with him into every concern, into the making of bricks for the new house. He was building another sort of a house, too. If they did, indeed, live in the heights of transfiguration, when all the retrospective and prospective of life seemed roseate and beautiful, should it not be together that they should build a tabernacle—a sanctuary in which to dwell? This thought was with him daily; it enveloped him like a cloak in whatever he was doing or thinking. On the heights—together! Was it chill and drear on the heights, as some supposed? No. Those who grovelled among the flesh-pots on the plain only thought it was. Let their climb be upward, but always together, until death did them part. It was only on the heights that a proper disinterested view of life could be obtained. So Hugh Neville went on building a dwelling-place for two. He saw Margaret often. It so happened that the ladies, headed by Eva and Margaret, came down in a body and visited "the men." Hugh had a ladies' tea party on the verandah one day, and felt quite grand and important. He borrowed chairs from the vestry to make up the number—and Roy had made a cake! The ladies were very good-natured about that cake, and praised it, and, moreover, ate it. Everyone

was very ridiculous, and I really believe it was the fun they enjoyed more than the cake.

"I am going to start a mission, not for natives, but for Colonists," Eva announced to her circle one day, in youthful self-assertiveness.

"Hark at the Babe," Roy whispered in a stage-whisper to Hugh.

"How rude you are, Roy," Eva went on, with a fine spirit. "I had always thought missionaries narrow-minded oddities, but since members of our family have joined the ranks I really begin to see they may have some sense after all. Surely, it is natural to hand on good things? Who would wish to keep them to oneself? As I was saying, when Roy so rudely interrupted me——"

"One of The Family, too," put in Hugh, in another stage-whisper.

Eva drew herself up to her full height. "Mr. Neville, please extinguish my rude brother."

Hugh promptly nudged Roy, and pinched him, and Roy shouted out. When the laugh had subsided, Eva continued:

"It is the people who object to missionaries who want missionising. Margaret knows she looks sweetly pretty in that blue linen gown, although she says it is meant to be severe, and in keeping with her calling."

"Everything that is beautiful and nice in this world is in keeping with our calling, my child," Roy said, a deep seriousness underlying his whimsical manner.

Margaret was smiling disparagement and blushing at something Hugh had said in an impressive undertone. Day by day Hugh saw in her eyes assent and consent to his scheme of building.

Margaret was blossoming in a way that Hugh, who loved her and believed in her, scarcely had thought possible. How sweet and good she was! How strong and yet gentle! Day by day some subtle influence was at work, transforming the would-be calm, impassive woman into a glorious being, as Hugh thought, lovable and radiantly beautiful. "How well Margaret looks," everyone said.

The girls knew Margaret was different, and they, long suppressed, gave vent to their devotion by many pretty acts and speeches.

Margaret scarcely ever went to her room without finding some little gift—a bunch of flowers, a plaited bangle, a piece of beadwork—shyly placed on her writing table.

They hovered about her paths as she flitted from place to place with her quick, energetic step and queenly carriage, busy with many absorbing duties. They were happy in casting loving, admiring glances, and waited for the smiles she scattered broadcast. Then they would scamper off loud in her praise. "Nkosazana is an everlasting rose," said a little girl, rapturously, one day, in her very limited English.

Hugh heard this exclamation, and he paused.

"What did you say?" he asked, smiling.

The group of little Zulu girls broke up, the speaker threw up her arm to hide her face, and with a patter of bare feet the little girls shyly fled, laughing and chattering.

Hugh loved small children, black or white, and these small Zulus are very winsome. Hugh laughed at the little creatures with their shapely bare legs and feet scampering off.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EVOLUTION.

MARGARET knew quite well that she had altered, or, rather, that her outlook on life had changed. It seemed to her now that she had been looking through smeary spectacles on to the world, which did not fit or belong to her, but which she used conscientiously because she thought they were in keeping with her calling. She had laid them aside, and was accepting some that Hugh offered her, which, instead of blurring objects, and making the world seem angular, were clear as crystal, and showed life in roseate hues and fine proportions.

Margaret sat in her room one afternoon with folded hands. As she came in after lunch she picked up a beaded serviette ring one of the girls had made and laid on her table. She smiled as she turned it over in her fingers, noticing how strongly and neatly the grass plaits were ornamented with coloured beads, orange and blue and a pale shade of green, with an edging of amber. She thought of the delight and affection with which the unknown Zulu girl had put in the stitches, and worked the pattern out of her head. The Zulu girls had always been as keen to show appreciation as now, but it was hidden from her. Hugh had always been as unselfish and adorable, but somehow she had missed understanding him. Margaret fell to thinking that afternoon how much beauty and goodness there was in this world unappreciated and unexploited. "The fault lies most times in ourselves," Margaret said, *sotto voce*; "we force ourselves to be sombre and unreal, and then call it goodness. I am beginning to understand that we can never rise to our best good until we are as happy as God meant us to be and gave us opportunities of being."

Margaret's manner had altered to Hugh. She was glad that it was so. She could no longer keep herself from being herself. Being good was not so unnatural as she had thought. Margaret's musings were indefinite rather than philosophical. She was too happy to reason or argue. At last she got up and yawned slightly.

"I suppose I must do the accounts," said she. "But where are the books?" She glanced at the familiar place on her table, where they usually lay, and remembered. "Oh! HE has them." Hugh, and everything that concerned him, was spelt in capital letters by Margaret, all unconsciously.

She put on the wide-brimmed hat that was tied under the chin by a soft silk scarf, and was most becoming. Margaret did not stop to consider if the hat suited her or not; she tied it on carelessly, and started off to the bachelors' cottage to ask Hugh about the account books. Whenever Margaret did a thing carelessly it was done with grace and effect. It was only when she studied her actions or thoughts that she lost her charm.

A few weeks back, before Roy's arrival, nothing would have induced Margaret to go near the cottage, however efficiently chaperoned by the rest of the staff. uSijuba had rigged himself up an ingenious arrangement for protecting the resurrected stove from bad weather. A few sheets of corrugated iron and a wattle pole or two made a satisfactory shelter. As Margaret drew near to the cottage, she could see uSijuba standing at the back door with his mouth wide open, and she wondered why he did so. Evidently the native had previously sought admittance; now he knocked again.

"Kamisa!" (open your mouth!) came Roy's voice. uSijuba glanced at Margaret in a puzzled sort of way, but he opened his mouth still wider. Margaret wondered if it would not soon extend to his ears. uSijuba knocked again.

"Kamisa!" Roy shouted, angrily this time.

Margaret opened the door, with twinkling eyes.

"Roy," said she, laughing, "you are telling uSijuba to open his mouth, but you really mean 'Come in,' don't you?"

Roy was in his shirt sleeves, and had a bath towel fastened into the arm holes of his waistcoat. There was flour on the carpet and flour on the tablecloth, and the study table was strewn with cooking utensils, for Roy was making a pudding.

"Of course, I meant 'come in,'" ejaculated Roy, laughing. "Did I say 'Open your mouth?' I meant 'Open the door.'"

"uSijuba might have had lockjaw," Margaret went on; "my coming saved him. He was opening his mouth wider and wider every time you spoke. Where is Mr. Neville?"

Margaret glanced round the shabby, comfortless room,

and looked in an inquiring way at the door of the bedroom beyond.

"Hugh's in the woodland bower, translating, Meg," said Roy. "You see, he would not help me make this pudding, although I told him that I had got to get used to things, and must learn to be self-sufficient. Hugh is not a bit self-sufficient."

"I think, Roy, dear, you look perfectly helpless and hopeless at this moment."

Roy feigned to look rueful.

"Even Eva's gone away and left me." He brushed an imaginary lock of hair from his forehead, and left a trail of flour behind.

"Of course, we had to send the Babe to Pretoria. In spite of her good intentions, you and I both know, Roy, that Eva is not cut out for the sort of life that we have chosen." There was a tender, almost maternal, inflection in Margaret's voice.

Roy scrutinised his sister affectionately.

There was a fresh, bright tone about Margaret, an atmosphere of complete content with life, which communicated itself to Roy.

He smiled appreciation, and said, warmly:

"This sort of life suits you awfully well, Margaret. You seem to be getting younger, even since I've been here."

This from Roy, whose unmerciful brotherly criticism had teased her terribly in her younger days.

"You just look stunning," Roy added, as Margaret blushed, laughed, and moved off in a disparaging manner.

Hugh threw down his pen, and came forward to meet her.

"I have been to the cottage for the account books, and will you—or are you too busy to go through them with me?"

Margaret felt her colour rising in a strange way, which surprised herself. It was borne in upon her how much she had altered within the last few weeks. Somehow, she felt lonely and uncertain how to act, or, rather, how to think; the familiar mental landmarks had altered their appearance, and she felt like a dazed person who suddenly is brought into the bright sunshine after living in gloom.

She felt herself drawn as in a dream to the seat in the wood. The gladness in Hugh's voice and manner, and the gentle yet insistent way he took the books from her, opened them, and began to run through the accounts, making a run-

ning fire of comments, and pausing for her assent or information, seemed all part of a beautiful dream, too.

"I owe you two and fourpence," he said, pausing to stretch out his leg, and dive into his trouser pocket. "Then there was the bacon you ordered for me with yours—that makes it four and nine."

He counted out the coins on the table. Margaret was incapable of calculation that moment, but they laughed and chatted, and peered together over the books, until the brim of her wide hat cut across his forehead. It took a long time until everything was made plain and straight, and in the doing of it each was evident that other things were also being made evident.

CHAPTER XX.

THE INEVITABLE.

"I am so glad we went through these to-day," Hugh said. "I am going away to a distant out-station to-morrow, and shall be away a week or two. It's nice to have things settled up."

He paused as a blank look settled on her face and the light died out of her eyes.

"Margaret!" His tone altered, and he leaned forward, trying to read her face under the broad-brimmed hat. His voice was at once eager, tender, and questioning. "Margaret!"

She avoided his gaze, and turned away her head, looking up the valley to the view of distant mountains.

"Is it—can it be possible that you care?"

"I—" faltered Margaret, and she felt the hot colour flooding her face. "Oh! don't!" This in a half-hearted sort of way, as he seized both trembling hands in his. "I meant must you go to-morrow?"

"Can you care for me a little bit? Dear heart, I've been building——"

"Building?" she interrupted, feebly; "but you have been only making bricks."

"It is another sort of building, for you and me," and he told her all his story.

Oh! how happy he was! How happy they both were! The world did not seem big enough to contain such happiness. The walk through the sheltering wood, and along the woodland terrace, and by devious little bends and twists, to keep out of veiw of the buildings of Ekuseni, was never forgotten by them.

By-and-bye, when they had settled down to talk things over complacently, Margaret thought she did not deserve such happiness.

"You deserve more than all the happiness and protection that I can give you, and the rest of my life shall be devoted to serving you."

"I did not know until lately that we were meant to be jovially happy in this world, as well as peacefully submissive. Do you remember Roy saying one day that we were the only creatures on this earth whom God had created with the grace of laughter? He said puppies and other animals were created with a fine idea of fun and good humour, and that he had known animals playing practical jokes on each other. He called laughter a grace to help us in times of stress and emergency, to keep us natural and sweet. He said it was a gift of an all-wise Father, who knows what is good for us better than we know ourselves. I could not forget Roy's words, and since then I have noticed how much there is about natural gladness and merriment in the Bible. 'Let the hills clap their hands; let them be joyful before the Lord.' Oh! Hugh, I have been so frightfully narrow and disagreeable in the past, even to you." Here Margaret shot such a loving, penitent look at her lover, that he deemed it expedient to stop all further protestations or regret by drawing her into his arms and kissing her passionately.

"And, instead of helping you, I hindered; but, henceforth, we will climb together, dear heart," he said, under his breath.

"Dear, you will help me and show me, for I am very foolish," she murmured, gently disengaging her fingers.

"Remember you are necessary to me, Margaret."

Oh! the happiness and content of that woodland walk, and the sense of protection that was enveloping her life! Hugh made a resolve that, God helping him, the soft glad light should never fade from her face. And it was so.

The sound of a native girl's angry voice was borne towards them on the breeze, and a bend in the path brought the lovers face to face with uSijuba and Lydia. Lydia, in a faded cotton frock, which she had long outgrown, and a torn blanket, was scolding uSijuba.

"What is the matter?" asked Margaret.

"Oh! Nkosazana, this young man wants me to choose him, and I say I loved him once, but he is no longer an amakolwa, with his stupid clothes, which make the kraal people laugh, and that Christianity is not wearing grand clothes, as he seems to think."

"uSijuba is really anxious to become a Christian, and he has asked me to let him stay here until he has learnt, and has been tried and proved, and is admitted to baptism. Is it not so, uSijuba?"

"Yebo, 'nkosi," the young Zulu said.

"Could you not love him if he were an ikolwa ? " Margaret asked.

"Yes," said Lydia, suddenly bursting into tears; "indeed, I do know now, and it troubles me that he has learnt many bad ways of thinking and talking in Johannesburg, which are, indeed, 'nkosazana, worse than the heathen. I would marry him if he were different."

"Then, tell him so," said Hugh, heartily.

Lydia did.

uSijuba promised to stay with the Umfundisi until he could marry Lydia.

"Is there something else troubling you, Lydia?" Margaret asked.

The poor girl looked distraught and weary, but, as the manner of the Zulu is, she would not explain for some time. She repeated, "Luto." (Nothing.)

For two years she had been living at the heathen kraal of her brothers, and she was seldom allowed to come to the school or church. She managed sometimes to come to the services, and brought one or two other girls who were feeling after Christianity, and who were influenced by her. Still, Lydia was unhappy, or, rather, she was being tormented. Her brothers, having drunk deeply to the dregs of the badness of our civilisation, returned with vigour to their own heathen practices and superstitions, and tried to shut out the existence and influence of Europeans. They paid their taxes, and were, outwardly, law-abiding, but they wished to live their own life in their own way, and have nothing to do with white people. Their intelligence had been developed in the wrong direction, and the last state was worse than the first. Guida, their father, who had been eaten by a crocodile, and who had never worked for white people, was far their superior. The brothers of Lydia might have become gaol-birds, and a menace to the safety of civilised women and children. Our modern methods of dealing with the native is producing and increasing such a type, but the brothers of Lydia did not wish to have anything to do with white people, even by getting put in gaol. They deserved punishment for breaking the law, but their improved intelligence succeeded in warding off discovery. They had not much respect for the white man's law or system of punishment, but it suited their indolence to steer clear of friction with white people.

As a set-off against their mental attitude was their sister Lydia's whole-hearted acceptance of Christianity which the white people had brought into her life. They distrusted any influence of the white people. When they brought Lydia back to their kraal, they commanded her to take off European clothes, and wear a blanket.

"If I take off these clothes, I cannot take off Christianity from my heart; it is inside," she said.

They all wished to settle down and marry, and to do so they must get money or cattle. Lydia must marry, and that would bring them in ten beasts, or its equivalent. Their improved intelligence made them crafty and cunning about the getting of money, but not clever about the way of keeping or spending it.

When they first came back from Johannesburg one bought a bicycle, an another an expensive organette. Both were broken very soon, and then they began to want more money. They borrowed from their neighbours, or sold the few remaining goats. They did not trouble, so long as they could keep out of the sphere of the white man's influence. They frequently had beer drinks, and, when they had previously secured a few pounds for fines, they engaged in faction fights, or went to dances. At the end of two years of this way of living they began to be hard pressed by their creditors, and one or other of two alternatives was before them—either to marry Lydia to the wealthiest lover, or to go back to work in Johannesburg.

Lydia refused to give up Christianity, or to marry a heathen. The brothers, although they fed her to keep her fat and comely, as she was their most valuable asset, and refrained for the same reason from striking her, or injuring her physically, yet refused to give her any money for clothes, or to allow her to be a Christian.

Lydia's life at that time was one continual struggle with the heathen atmosphere which enveloped her. Sometimes she managed to get away, and stay with her friend Agnes, the wife of Alexander, who lived in a pretty little square house, with glazed windows, and had by this time a fat baby boy, whom she kept scrupulously clean, and who was the joy of her life.

"I feel that God is my father every day," Lydia confessed to her friend, "and I never close my eyes at night without feeling the smile of Our Lord, giving me peace."

CHAPTER XXI.

A KNIGHT ERRANT.

MARGARET was showing the contents of a mission box, which had just arrived, to Lydia.

"See, Lydia, ladies in England have sent some clothes for the native Christian girls. Here is a red cotton dress, hanging from a yoke, and made very wide and big." She held it up against Lydia. "It would fit you, and you could put a belt round the waist if you liked. Take it; perhaps we can find a shawl, too."

Margaret dived deeper down into the box.

"Luckily, Zulu girls can do with very few clothes, and only look absurd when they try to dress as European ladies. They should only dress to be modestly covered, and to keep themselves clean and neat. There are people who suffer bodily pain and discomfort in England for want of sufficient covering for their bodies. God puts it into the heart of other good people to help them, too. By-and-bye, when Zulu women are sufficiently educated and civilised to earn money honestly, I believe more expensive clothing will adapt itself to them. Luckily, in these days, Zulu girls can indulge their natural love of the bright colours, which suit them so well, for a very small cost. You can pick up a piece of bright print, enough for a dress, for a couple of shillings."

Margaret intercepted this speech by bringing up piles of unbleached calico garments, and simply-made cotton or flannelette dresses, and arranging them on chairs, pausing to look at Lydia.

"I wish," she said, "native girls would wear simple clothes, and try and keep them clean and neat. Here at Ekuseni we do not allow them to go to extremes, as you know. I hope, Lydia, when you marry and have daughters, you will teach them to be clean and neat."

Lydia smiled intelligence and acquiescence, but she was holding out the red cotton dress between finger and thumb, disclaiming its possession.

"What! don't you like it?" Margaret asked, sitting bolt upright.

"Oh, if you please, nkosazana"—there was a break in her voice—"I dare not take it. I like it very much. If you will, please keep it for me until I can have it."

"Why, what is the matter, Lydia?"

"I ran away from my brother and the amadiki yesterday, and I do not want them to know where I am. My brothers are employing the amadiki and Pongola to put muti on the path, or somewhere in my way, to make a bad spirit come into me, and to make me give up my belief. . . . . I would if I could, 'Nkosazana, but I cannot shut my hear to the Light—it is inside, and seems shining all about me. . . . Oh! but I am afraid of the amadiki, and the muti of Pongola!" Here Lydia covered her face with her hands and shuddered.

"You poor girl," said Margaret, compassionately. She left off in the middle of the packing, and led the Zulu girl gently into her room. "You are not afraid of the heathen's muti, Lydia, are you?"

The girl looked up at the face so full of love and gentleness bending over her. All the well-springs of motherliness, kindness, and loving sympathy, had been let loose in Margaret's nature by the happiness that had come into her own life. A good woman, sweetened—indeed, she seemed like a glorified Madonna as she comforted the persecuted girl who squatted at her feet. Lydia had never felt the Inkosazana so inspiring and comfortable, and wished she had come more often.

"The heathen's muti is powerful, and Pongola is clever."

"Indeed, he is," smiled Margaret. "He does many wonderful things; but God is greater and more wonderful than Pongola, with all his mysterious cleverness."

Lydia's face took on the reflection of her smile.

"Pongola made fire come out of his mouth the other day," she exclaimed, more complacently.

"I would not be surprised at any clever thing that Pongola did," said Margaret.

"No," assented the Zulu girl, "I do not believe in him, but they just worry and torment me. Maseba is at the back of it all, I know. He has been trying for two years to marry me—ever since he was out of prison. Sometimes I feel, for the sake of peace, I must give in."

"Never!" Margaret smiled, gently and encouragingly.

"Be true to yourself, Lydia, and to Our Lord, and He will find a way out."

"It is not that my brothers want to get rid of me as that they want the oxen. There is a law case, and they have to pay a big fine, within a few days, or go to gaol. That is why they have sent the amadiki. These people work themselves up into a fury, bang on their breasts with knobkerries, shout and cry to the spirits to come and take possession of them. My brothers and most of the people at our kraal became possessed, too, and hit themselves with sticks, shouted, and pranced, too. They banged and shouted louder and louder, their faces getting fiercer and almost unrecognisable. As one watched, one wanted to do the same. Something inside one prompts one to do as they do. . . . I was so afraid of being possessed with devils like them, that I ran away."

These amadiki who trouble Lydia are a band of hysterical or self-hypnotised people, amongst the Zulus, who work themselves up into a demoniacal fury, crying on the spirits (the amadhlozi) to come and take possession of them.

A party came, one day, into the grounds of this house in which I am writing, and tried hard to get the native Christians to come and join them. They boasted that there would not be a Christian left at a mission station they passed, but no one joined them on that occasion. The lady of the house went out, and demanded them to desist and depart. She rated them so soundly, that they ceased their noise and crept away without a word. She described them as a hideous, repulsive set of people.

Lydia was encouraged and strengthened by Margaret, and went back to her brothers' kraal.

Her eldest brother called her. He was the eldest son of her father's first wife, and was a great big, brawny, evil-ooking Zulu, with a cast in his eye; joining the amadiki in their frenzies had left him wilder and fiercer-looking than before. He called Lydia and firmly, but not unkindly, told her that she was to marry Maseba, who was a rich man, and high amongst the Zulus.

"I do not wish to marry Maseba," she said, bravely. "My heart will not let me do so. He is a heathen, and has many wives. I am a Christian, and desire to be the one wife of one man."

"That is the custom of the white people," he said, "but not of our people. Maseba is sending his lobola—fifteen head of cattle—more than a Christian girl is ever worth.

As for Christianity, you can give that up; it also belongs to the white people."

"Oh, my brother, you do not understand," began Lydia.

"It is enough! I have spoken!" he said, and dismissed her.

"Stay!" he said, as she prepared to depart. "We want money to save ourselves from going to prison. There is no longer time to get money by working for white men on the Rand. We must have money at once. If you do not wish to marry Maseba, a white man at a store will give us a sum of money for you to belong to him. If you do not marry Maseba, we will send you there; you seem to like white people best."

Lydia flinched, but drew herself up to her full height. She was a splendid young woman. Her eyes sparkled with indignation and suppressed fury. Under the dusky skin the warm colour glowed.

"How can you want me to marry Maseba, who is old, dirty, and fat? Did he not burn his first wife? Would you have me to be burnt when I am of no use to him?"

"As for being of no use to him, he is old, and will die first, then you are free; meanwhile, you will be happy in the manner of women . . . . ."

The coarse Zulu speech cannot be paraphrased. To Lydia it was not extraordinary or surprisingly repulsive, but we have been civilised out of such coarseness many ages past.

All Lydia said was: "I will marry a Christian Zulu in the manner of Christian people."

The brother was angry. He rose, in a great fury, and for the first time seized a stick wherewith to strike his half-sister.

"Go! I see you will save your people, and will belong to a white man!"

Lydia fled from his presence, and hid away in the bush, until she saw him depart on his way to interview the white storekeeper. Then she threaded her way back, and begged the women to give her some food.

They thrust some mealie-cobs into her hands, and told her to go and hide again. They were afraid to be kind to her, in case they brought down the displeasure of the indoda, her eldest brother.

Two days passed in which Lydia eluded her brothers. She was wretched, hungry, and frightened. The storekeeper

had sent her a handsome new cloth dress, suitable for a white woman, and a hat. Lydia found them in her hut when she stole in unobserved. She picked them up, laid them outside, and fled away to the bush again. There, in her hiding-place, she remembered all the stories of God's goodness to those in affliction, and His promises to them who serve him. "Deliver us from evil," she prayed, and waited. She took the book Margaret had given her out of the folds of her ragged shawl, and, turning over the leaves, read how many people had suffered for Christ's sake. She nibbled the mealies, and read a little, until she felt comforted and rested. At night-time she was very much afraid, until the remembrance of several passages of Scripture reassured her and gave her courage. Then the stars seemed to twinkle a benediction through the evergreen branches of the trees.

Early next morning, before it was light, she was startled from her sleep by the crackling of branches, and rustling of grass. She sprang to her feet, and stood ready like a stag at bay to do battle for her honesty. For a moment she hid her face in her shawl, and prayed, "Deliver us from evil."

"Don't be frightened," said a familiar Zulu voice; "I have heard of your trouble, and am come to help you, if you will let me."

Lydia lifted her head, and saw uSijuba in the dimness. She gave him her hand solemnly.

"How can you help me? What can you do?" she said, like a poor dazed creature.

"I have heard how that you must marry at once, because your brothers want money. I asked the Umfundisi for a week's holiday, and came to seek you. Yesterday, as the sun was setting, I met one of the women of your kraal gathering wood. She told me you had gone away—were hiding in the bush. She also said she admired you for being so brave and strong, and that she would be a Christian too, if she dared."

"Ah! that was Tambisa," she murmured. "I was not at all brave once. She will grow to it. You cannot keep the day from breaking, or the light from shining. Neither can you prevent the people from being Christians; it is the work of God," she said.

Just then the sun burst over the top of a neighbouring hill, and threaded its way through the trees.

Lydia looked up at the tall young Zulu before her with softening eyes.

"Ah! uSijuba, you have altered," she murmured. "It was only the outside of you that was bad and un-Christian; inside your heart was good all the time. It is a very Christian thing to come and help me—but what will you do?"

"It is neither Christian nor otherwise for a man to seek out the woman he loves, and that is how it is with me, Lydia. All the time that I was in Johannesburg I remembered you. But, still, I confess that I am a Christian, for, in spite of all the trouble and confusion there is amongst white people and their ways, the Light does shine, and it is gladness."

uSijuba spoke in a quiet, manly way, and waited for Lydia's answer.

"Come," said he, "will you go with me to your brothers, and say that you have chosen me, and I will bring the cattle?"

Again the colour mounted under Lydia's dusky skin, and all she said was, "I will come."

"I am well-to-do," uSijuba said, for I have been saving my money for years. My cattle and goats are with my mother's people."

Later in the day the cattle were driven up, and uSijuba won the brothers' consent for Lydia to go back to Ekuseni until she was married.

After all, the people were sorry to part with Lydia, the women especially, and they set her on her way with many blessings.

"The ways of the Umkulunkulu are greater than the ways of Pongola," said Lydia, "for I cried unto God to deliver me from the evil which was choking me, and He did."

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*N.B.—The whole of this chapter is from facts; the names of characters, the position of the kraal, and the time when it happened have been disguised, to avoid offending the sensibilities of the perpetrators.

CHAPTER XXII.

SMELT OUT.

PONGOLA was in a rage. After all the trouble he had taken for Maseba, that reprobate old savage refused to give him the cattle he had promised. It is true the girl had slipped through their fingers, but was he not as disappointed as Maseba? Had not his reputation as a witch-doctor been at stake—and was there not a blight on it now?

"You should have succeeded in making the girl like you," he told Maseba, in a rage.

"She was an ikolwa!" stormed Maseba.

"What of that?" Pongola demanded. "Did not I tell you to go to church, and pretend to be a Christian, too? The girl would have smiled on you then."

"Suka! you son of a dog" shouted old Maseba. "I am afraid of the Umfundisi; he has power. Inside you, you feel you must listen to him and obey."

"Have not I been to church to try and learn the Umfundisi's magic? They do nothing—they sing, they kneel down, and shut their eyes, and afterwards the Umfundisi talks to them."

"I tell you, there is magic in it," Maseba insisted. "Have not I felt a strange feeling in my backbone when the Umfundisi has been speaking to me? He has more magic than you. You are a fraud and a cheat, and you will have none of my cattle. Suka!"

"I am broken in this part of Zululand, through you and your affairs," Pongola said. "My magic and muti are ruined with the people round here, for they will not believe in me. You must give me the cattle as you promised."

"Make the people believe in you, then," taunted old Maseba. "You did not get me the young handsome wife you said you could. Now, hamba! I will find a wife for myself."

The quarrel raged long and loud, and the two men nearly came to blows. In the end, Pongola took himself off to a distant part of Zululand, where there were no missionaries or white people, and there he worked up another reputation and practise. He got on very well, and after some

time the chief of that part of the country sent for him, having heard of his magic and cleverness.

"I am very unpopular with my people," said the chief, "and I wish the people to like me."

Pongola stayed and talked until he had learnt a great deal of the chief's family affairs. Then he promised to take time and work magic to make events move in the chief's favour.

When he went away he repeated to himself a remark of the chief's: "My third daughter is engaged to a fat man of the tribe of Magwaza, named Maseba, who is rich."

"I know Maseba," said Pongola to himself, and he grinned, but he said nothing.

By-and-bye Pongola informed the chief that the muti he required to work his purpose was made from the fat of a man.

It did not surprise the chief; he had heard of such things before. Pongola went on to say that the chief, after various ceremonies, must anoint himself with the muti thus obtained.

After a time there was a beer drink, to which Maseba was invited.

Maseba started on his way. He intended to make himself popular with the people at the kraal, where the beer drink was to be held. He fortified himself by throwing out some amasi to his ancestral spirits, and to 'Nyandezulu (a bundle of the blue heavens), literally, but really a harmless green snake, which glided in and out of the wicker-work enclosure of the kraal, and in which was supposed to dwell the guardian spirit of his family.

He polished his head-ring, or ikehla, washed and anointed his body, rubbed his calves with fat, until they were like burnished bronze, and slung on necklets and armlets of beadwork. He fastened a bunch of hawk's feathers in his woolly crown, and then, the last touch which was to complete the effect, he put on two wide straps of beadwork across his naked body from shoulder to waist, and caught them into the strip of hide which kept his new belt—a complete goat's skin—in position. He strutted up and down for the edification of the home people. He was very fat and splendid, they thought.

The kraal had been moved a hundred yards up the river after Nerea's death, and no one visited the bare patches of trodden earth, and broken barricades, which marked where

the old huts had been, for, said Maseba's people, "The spirit of Nerea is restless, and wanders round the spot where her body was burnt."

Maseba had employed a witch-doctor, other than Pongola, to settle this matter, but the young girls still said that Nerea's crying came to them on the wind. The new kraal was built to be out of earshot of the wailing spirit, and out of sight of the old mealie garden where Nerea was burnt.

Maseba was careful to guide his steps so that he had not to pass the remains of the old kraal. Fat man as he was, he started off at a swinging trot, with his bundle of sticks, a small shield, and a billy-can containing utyala. Avoiding the kraal, he turned off by the river, and lifted up his voice in a singularly mournful chant, with the intention of frightening away disagreeable spirits, and keeping himself in an exalted mood.

It was a still day; there was an unusual haze hanging over the landscape. In spite of himself, Maseba's good spirits began to desert him, and his hopes to ebb away. A strange depression seized him; he felt what he was in reality —old, chill, and a defeated, despised man. Not one of the women at his kraal loved him; even in the blind acquiescence and servile allegiance that Zulu women accord their lords Maseba knew that he was hated. "Ah!" thought he, "my new wife shall love me, and make me young." He tried to prance and sing with renewed vigour. Suddenly out of the mist, by the river, a voice seemed to speak to him—"God shall smell you out, you wicked old man!"

He turned round, expecting to see the Umfundisi, but there was nothing and no one, only a haze on the reeds. The eyes of the Umfundisi, and the look in them, which he dreaded, seemed to start out from every bush in the path by the river—"God shall smell you out!"

Maseba ran, madly, from the eyes and the voice, but they followed him still. As he ran, so he seemed to see the fire which turned Nerea into muti clinging to her gaunt frame. He covered his face with his shield, and then her voice, as it was when she was a young woman, spoke to him in the sibilant Zulu tongue—"God shall smell you out, you wicked old man!"

At the wagon road he fell in with another party of natives, who were going to the beer drink, and in their company his fears were set aside.

"Why are you so put out, Maseba?" they asked.

"I saw an impufumo by the river," he replied, and would not be tempted to expound.

At the beer drink Maseba drank freely, and when the blood of the men was rushing wildly through their heads Pongola appeared, dressed in the skin of a baboon, and with little bladders of muti hanging from his head and round his neck.

"This is the man that is wondrous fat, O, Chief!" he said.

To attempt to describe the scene which followed is beyond me. It was an exhibition of wildest debauchery; men and women, madly intoxicated, beat Maseba with sticks until he died, and then, spent with intoxication and the frenzy of superstition, they slept.

Next day the muti was made, and applied to the chief. The horrible details came out at the trial later.

The murder was not discovered for months, for the chief lived right out of the track of white people. It might never have been discovered but for "Beetles," Pongola's apprentice. Hugh had managed at one time to acquire some influence over the poor imbecile. If nothing else, it was a civilising influence, and "Beetles's" nature revolted against the horrible crime, and he spoke about it to some more enlightened natives, who, in turn, told the white people, and an inquiry was instituted. Maseba was missing, and the South African papers soon had accounts of the witchcraft and murder which had been practised.

At Ekuseni, one of the teaching staff remembered Maseba.

"Let us go round to Mrs. Neville's, and ask her."

"Going round to Mrs. Neville's" was a journey which everyone of the mission staff loved.

As at all large stations, the workers changed as the years passed. Newcomers, with fresh enthusiasm, took the place of those who went to new stations or different work as it increased. Hugh and Margaret were old stagers.

The homestead had altered, for at the time of Hugh's marriage sufficient money did not roll in for the vicarage.

It seemed, indeed, that their wedding would have to be indefinitely postponed, and Hugh to continue to live in the tumble-down shanty he called his cottage.

It was a grief to Margaret to leave her work as Lady Warden of the girls' school. In the end, four big sunny rooms were built on to the homestead, and Margaret kept

her position as Lady Warden. A large bay window was thrown out from the already large dining-room, which Hugh called the commons room. Some half-dozen years had past, when a nursery table, with a young bright girl as nursery governess, stood in the sunny bay window.

Little Cicely and fat, chubby Francis Neville were the delight of the staff.

Christian natives began to settle on the farm at Ekuseni, and later a hospital was started, with a nursing sister in charge, and her colleague.

A lay brother put in several months' residence, to help Hugh with the building. Sometimes there were as many as ten people dining in the common room, and all missionaries. They were a merry crowd of happy natural people. Sometimes an oddity or a failure turned up, as at other places, and passed on, but, on the whole, living on the heights promoted goodfellowship and geniality.

Margaret kept house, and trained the girls to do the cooking.

"Going round to Mrs. Neville's" was an institution. One had to go out of the ordinary homestead to get into the Neville's quarters. When one of the staff was in trouble, or needed encouragement, he or she found comfort and hope in "going round to Mrs. Neville's." Perhaps a romp with the children, or a chat with Margaret as she went about her duties or sat sewing, helped to make peace, and to bring back the right way of looking at things.

Margaret did not seem to grow a bit older. Her beautiful rippling hair framed a softly smiling face; her manner and temperament seemed mellow and more placid than in those days before her marriage. She was a strong, brave, sympathetic woman, and radiated, unconsciously, happiness and goodness into the whole atmosphere. Hugh was getting grizzled, but he was wonderfully wiry and active. He still seemed boyish, and was completely happy.

One day he and Margaret were talking. She was sewing, while Cicely and fat Francis were playing at her feet. Hugh came and leaned over the back of her chair.

"Dear heart," he said, "this is the anniversary of our wedding day. How prettily the girls decked the avenue with garlands of wild flowers from tree to tree."

Margaret leaned back against her husband, smiling.

"Yes, dear, and the church looked a veritable bower. The girls learned the English of the hymns, which was diffi-

cult for them, and sang sweetly. . . . How funny it was! The decorations were supposed to be a secret, but we could not help seeing them being made. The excitement there was when someone of the staff came upon the girls at their self-imposed task. 'Oh! don't look, 'Nkosazana!' they shouted. Of course, nobody looked, but we knew what they were doing all the time."

Margaret laughed softly, and Hugh kissed her.

Fat Francis looked up from his toy wagon, and then scrambled to his mother's lap to have a share in the caressing. Cicely shook back her wealth of bright brown curls, and climbed up the wicker chair, with a shout of delight, to put her arm round her father's neck, and to rub her cheek against his.

The whole family fell to laughing and kissing each other in a truly ridiculous fashion.

"When you were married, mother darling, what did you wear?" asked Cicely after a while.

"Just white, dear, with a veil and wreath of real orange blossom from the garden. The girls wore wreaths over their amaduku, and looked very nice."

Cicely gave her mother an enthusiastic hug. "Oh, you were beautiful, mother darling; wasn't she, father?"

"Yes, dear, she was perfect," Hugh said.

"Who told the girls to wear wreaths?" Cicely asked.

No one, dear; they just did it to please us. It was their own idea," said Margaret.

"And a very pretty one," commented Hugh.

Barbara and Jack Wilson had taken a farm a few miles out of the City, and within a walking distance of Ekuseni. Barbara called it the outpost, and said, truly, that she was of great value to the mission, being an outside worker. She could glean people's sympathy and interest, and turn it to good account in the missionary enterprise.

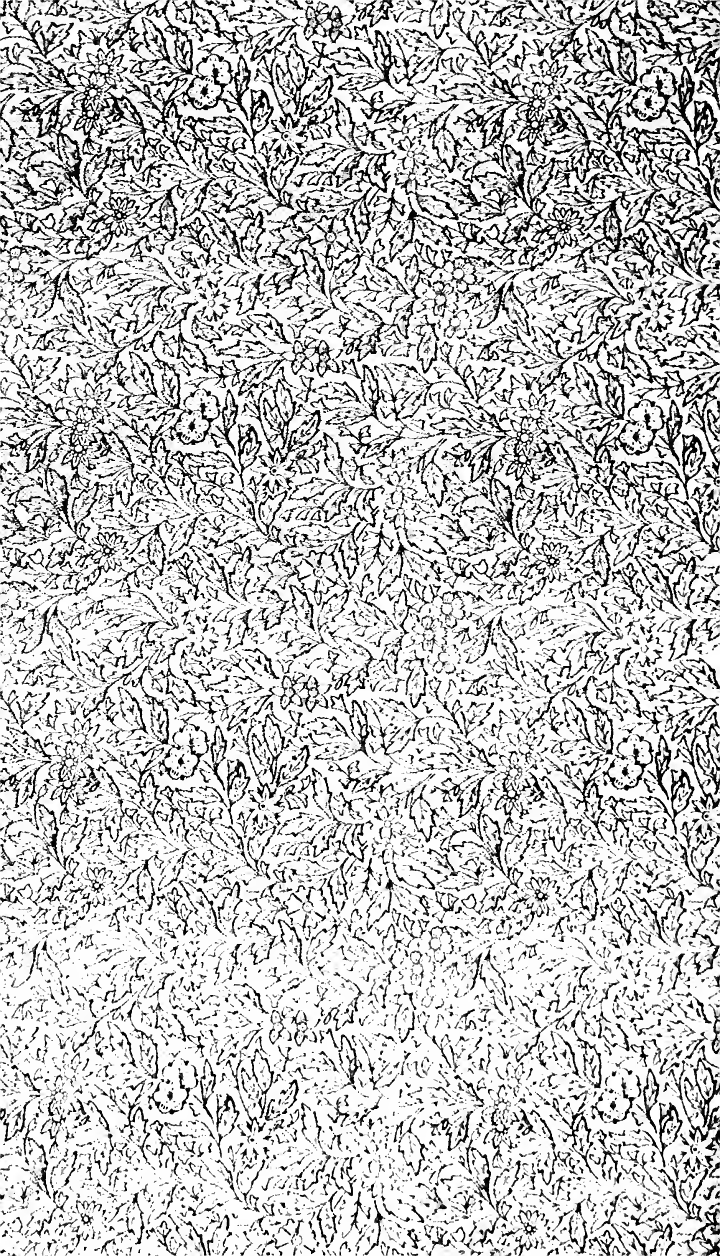
After a time the Government withdrew much of the practical help they had been giving to the school, because the scholars, who were raw Zulus, living in the heart of Zululand, and having never seen a town, could not keep up with the smart girls and boys in Natal, who lived in the midst of civilisation, and had special advantages in brightening their intelligences.

"It was," as Hugh said, "like expecting the raw village school boy in England to pass as well in his examination as a London board school boy. Still, he added, cheerily, "it is

the same mistake that most white people make, of dividing the Zulus into a couple of classes, instead of remembering that there are as many grades of transition as colours in the rainbow. However, if the Government does not help us, it is depriving itself and the people it represents of a supreme benefit."

So went the years at Ekuseni—the House of the Dawn—smoothly, almost without comment, but full of keen life, and never-ending human interest.

THE END.



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